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Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization*

August 1996

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Summary

The fiftieth session of the General Assembly was marked by the largest ever gathering of world leaders during a three-day special commemorative meeting, at which Member States and observers adopted the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations. Some 200 speakers — 91 Heads of State, 8 vice-presidents, 1 crown prince, 37 prime ministers, 10 deputy prime ministers, 21 foreign ministers, 9 chairman of delegations and 23 observers — reaffirmed their commitment to the Charter of the United Nations, expressed gratitude to those who have served the Organization, determined that the United Nations of the future would work with renewed vigour and effectiveness, and pledged to give the twenty-first century a United Nations equipped, financed and structured to serve its peoples.

The General Assembly, its General Committee and Main Committees held 393 meetings during the fiftieth session, compared with 384 during the forty-ninth; informal meetings and consultations totalled 296, versus 266 during the forty-ninth session; and the working groups of the Assembly held 292 meetings, compared with 163 during the previous session. As at 25 July 1996, the Assembly had adopted 321 resolutions during the fiftieth session, compared with 328 during the forty-ninth.

The open-ended working groups of the General Assembly — on an Agenda for Peace, an Agenda for Development, Security Council reform, the financial situation of the United Nations and the strengthening of the United Nations system — worked intensively to improve the effectiveness of the Organization and are scheduled to submit their reports to the Assembly before the end of its fiftieth session.

The number of formal meetings of the Security Council, compared with a similar period last year, decreased from 131 to 106. Consultations of the whole numbered 189, down from 226, resolutions decreased from 63 to 51 and presidential statements from 64 to 49.

This year, the Security Council focused its attention on African affairs, as well as on the former Yugoslavia. The Council also continued its consideration of agenda items dealing with the Americas, the question of sanctions and the various sanctions regimes.

The Economic and Social Council held its substantive session from 24 June to 26 July 1996 in New York. Its high-level segment dealt with an issue of priority on the international agenda, namely, international cooperation against the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotics and related activities. The coordination segment focused on coordination of activities of the United Nations system for poverty eradication. The operational activities segment focused on strengthening cooperation between the United Nations development system and the Bretton Woods institutions. The Economic and Social Council also adopted a resolution on the consultative relationship between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations.

A report containing Member States' comments on the review of the role of the Trusteeship Council was submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly, at its request.

The International Court of Justice had 14 contentious cases on its docket and two requests for an advisory opinion.

In the Secretariat, considerable progress was made in the implementation of the Secretary-General's comprehensive management reform plan, set out in last year's annual report. Improvement in the management of the Organization's cost structure was a major focus of the past year, during which the Secretary-General proposed and the General Assembly approved the Organization's first zero nominal growth budget.

The $2,608 million in approved appropriations for the biennium 1996-1997 included $154 million in cost reductions mandated by the General Assembly beyond the $98 million already indicated in the Secretary-General's proposed budget. The Secretary-General was asked to propose reductions while ensuring the full implementation of all mandated activities; he has met these cost reductions through a combination of staff cuts and efficiency measures. He was also asked to absorb some $35 million for new unbudgeted mandates; the means of absorption will be reported in the performance report.

Efficiency measures implemented during the past year have led to substantial savings: printing of documents and publications has been cut by 27 per cent since January 1996; by late autumn, more than 270,000 United Nations documents in all official languages will be available electronically in at least 157 countries and the majority of the New York missions; travel has been reduced by 26 per cent in the first six months of 1996; and the consolidation of purchases of foreign currencies, beginning in July, will mean savings of more than $1 million during the biennium.

The financial situation of the United Nations was a major focus of attention throughout the year and remains a matter of urgent concern. As at 31 July 1996, unpaid assessments totalled $3 billion, of which $0.8 billion was due to the regular budget and $2.2 billion to the peace-keeping budget. The recurring need to borrow cash from peace-keeping accounts means that by the end of 1996 the United Nations will owe Member States some $675 million for troops and equipment. While the overall cash-flow situation has improved, the Organization continues to face a worsening regular budget situation, with a persistent negative cash flow already seen and forecast for many months of the year.

The work of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development centred around the forty-second session of the Trade and Development Board, which reviewed and made recommendations on the functioning of the intergovernmental machinery of the Conference, and the ninth session of the Conference, held at Midrand, South Africa, from 27 April to 11 May 1996.

The second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) was held at Istanbul from 3 to 14 June 1996. The Conference, which was unique in its openness to representatives of civil society, produced a detailed Habitat Agenda, as well as a commitment by Governments to the progressive realization of the right to housing as provided for in international instruments.

During the period under review, some 23.3 million people have been targeted to receive assistance through United Nations inter-agency appeals, covering Angola, Afghanistan, the Caucasus region, the Russian Federation (Chechnya), the Great Lakes region, Iraq, Lebanon, Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Sudan and the former Yugoslavia. Of the $2.5 billion requested in the 11 appeals launched since September 1995, a total of $795 million has so far been pledged or carried over.

Between 1 September 1995 and 31 March 1996, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat provided assistance to 31 Member States to help them cope with the impact of 45 natural disasters and environmental emergencies. During the same period, the Department arranged for 13 relief operations from the United Nations Pisa warehouse and dispatched five field missions of its disaster assessment and coordination teams.

Protection and resettlement of refugees remained the focus of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, whose population of concern, at the end of 1995, stood at some 24 million worldwide, including 14.2 million refugees, along with returnees, internally displaced persons and others.

As part of the ongoing effort to implement the Agenda for Peace, the Organization has strengthened its capacity for preventive action and early warning by setting up an Oversight Group of the Framework for Coordination, already established among the three departments of the Secretariat primarily concerned with the prevention, control and resolution of conflicts, the Departments of Humanitarian Affairs, Political Affairs and Peace-keeping Operations.

The Departments of Political Affairs and Peace-keeping Operations are increasing their cooperation with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs on the Humanitarian Early Warning System.

While the commitment to United Nations peace-keeping declined significantly (67,269 troops were deployed in July 1995 as compared with 25,296 troops in July 1996), the complexity of the tasks entrusted to United Nations personnel did not diminish during the past year, as is revealed by the present reports detailed account of United Nations activities in preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping.

During the year under review, the United Nations was involved in 33 peace operations, 17 of which were peace-keeping operations. Progress was made in developing a rapidly deployable headquarters team, in enhancing preparedness for conflict prevention and peace-keeping in Africa and in further developing the system for standby arrangements.

Events over the course of the past year reaffirmed two key lessons: that every peace operation must be deployed with the strength necessary to achieve the tasks entrusted to it and to protect itself, and that no instrument for peace and security can bring about peace without the will of the parties to the conflict to achieve peace.

The past year also witnessed a determined effort by the international community to take action to end the scourge of terrorism. In its resolution 50/53, the General Assembly reaffirmed the 1994 Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, and at the Summit of Peacemakers, on 13 March 1996, the Secretary-General stressed his commitment to work towards adopting concrete measures to end terrorism.

On disarmament, three major long-term multilateral efforts in the nuclear field have strengthened the broad consensus in favour of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime: the signing of the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (15 December 1995), the signing of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (the Pelindaba Treaty) (11 April 1996) and work towards the finalization of the text of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. The period under review was also marked by new and ongoing initiatives in micro-disarmament, not least of which is the effort to achieve a permanent global ban on landmines and their components.

Between August 1995 and April 1996 the United Nations received 16 new requests for electoral assistance; assistance was provided in response to 10 of those requests, as well as to 17 requests received prior to August 1995.

During the period under review, the Departments of Humanitarian Affairs and Peace-keeping Operations were together responsible for mine-clearance programmes in Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Mozambique and Rwanda, with continuing input into the programmes in Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic. A one-year programme was completed in Yemen.

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I

Introduction: Renewal and reform

1. This is my fifth annual report on the work of the Organization, presented in accordance with Article 98 of the Charter of the United Nations. Like the others, it offers a comprehensive overview of improvements in the administration of the Organization and of the full range of its efforts in the service of humanity: to help the afflicted and the suffering; to oppose war, violence and intolerance; to promote the rights and dignity of every individual; and to help bring about the economic, social, political and environmental conditions for long-term human progress.

2. In the context of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the past year has brought a historic recommitment by Member States to the purposes and principles of their Organization. At a three-day special commemorative meeting of the General Assembly, held in October 1995, 128 Heads of State and Government, joined by other high-level representatives of Member States and Permanent Observers, adopted the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations, pledging themselves to give the twenty-first century a United Nations equipped, financed and structured effectively for the peoples of the world, in whose name it was established.

3. The period covered in the pages of this annual report has, however, also brought indications of a diminished willingness to engage the critical issues on the international agenda through the United Nations. Most notable among these indicators have been the ongoing financial crisis, which so dominated the first part of the year and remains a matter of urgent concern; the decline in peace-keeping activity (where 67,269 troops were deployed in July 1995 as compared with 25,296 in July 1996) without a parallel decline in the level of conflict requiring international attention; and a continuation of the dismaying downward trend in the level of resources made available for development, including through the United Nations system.

4. Yet over the course of the past year, further substantial progress has been made, as this report reveals, in strengthened administrative procedures, in adapting peace-keeping to new circumstances and in the effectiveness and coherence of development operations. As the rapidly evolving world situation demands new departures in both substance and structures, the United Nations has been undergoing comprehensive change to meet new and emerging problems and to tackle persistent problems in new contexts.

5. During the past 12 months, reform has been high on the Secretary-General's agenda, as well as on the agenda of the intergovernmental machinery, in particular the work programme of the General Assembly. Five working groups of the Assembly have been addressing major aspects of reform.

6. In my statement of 11 March 1996 to the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System, I stressed that reform — indeed change in the Organization — should be perceived not as an imposition, not as compromising the objectives of the Charter, but as adapting structures and methods to the new global environment that the Organization has helped to bring about.

7. During the past year, this perception has gained ground at both the Secretariat and intergovernmental levels. Further concrete reform measures have been introduced. Many objectives that had been pursued without success in the past several years were finally realized. Major challenges, however, still lie ahead.

8. There are three main levels of institutional reform: intergovernmental, organizational and managerial. Each level differs in both the changes required and in the distribution of responsibility among the Secretary-General and the Member States for the actions necessary to effect those changes. They all must be pursued in a mutually reinforcing way, however. In this respect too, progress has been significant.

9. In relation to intergovernmental reform — the responsibility for which lies primarily with Member States — three interrelated objectives are, explicitly or implicitly, being pursued: improvements in the effectiveness and functioning of the principal organs; a

better balance in the authority of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, as envisioned in the Charter; and a streamlining of the subsidiary machinery — an important condition for effective overall reform, particularly in the economic and social fields.

10. As for the General Assembly, improvements in its functioning have been a major focus in the programme of the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System. At the same time, action has been taken by the Assembly, in its resolution 50/227, to reinforce significantly the coordinating role of the Economic and Social Council. Equally important, the Assembly instructed the Council to undertake further reviews of its functional and regional commissions and its expert groups. The stage has thus been set not only for greater balance in the functioning of the principal organs, but also for a further streamlining and strengthening of the intergovernmental machinery in the economic and social fields.

11. Organizational reform concerns the simplification of Secretariat structures and the rationalization of both the multiplicity of programmes and funds and their relationships with the Secretariat. As such, it is a joint responsibility of the Secretary-General and the Member States. The reorganization I introduced soon after taking office, which involved a drastic reduction in the number of high-level posts and a significant simplification in Secretariat structures, was consolidated during the programme budget biennium 1994-1995. That reorganization has, in turn, made it possible to achieve zero nominal growth for the current biennium and has made way for a further phase of reform, involving not only the central Secretariat but also all the programmes and funds comprising the Organization, which I outlined in my statement of 11 March to the High-level Working Group of the General Assembly.

12. Complementing these two levels of institutional reform, managerial reform, which is primarily under the responsibility of the Secretary-General, is well under way. Progress during the year has been significant in relation to each of the strategic areas of management: human resources, cost structure and information and technology.

13. With respect to human resources, the system of accountability and responsibility that I presented to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session has been further consolidated. As an integral part of that system, the Code of Conduct of the International Civil Service is being strengthened and updated. A new work planning and appraisal system has been introduced at all duty stations. A comprehensive management training programme has been instituted and has already been completed by over 300 senior managers. The number of women in posts subject to geographical distribution has reached the highest point in United Nations history, and recruitment costs have been reduced by 30 per cent.

14. As for the management of costs, the current approved budget represents a 10 per cent reduction in real terms and includes cost cuts mandated by the General Assembly of $154 million, beyond the $98 million already indicated in my budget submission. This new budget reduces the total number of staff posts to 12 per cent less than that of 10 years ago. At the same time, the new Integrated Management Information System has enhanced the use of financial, human resource and procurement information, and has strengthened internal controls and accountability.

15. Progress in the management of technology has also been significant and has affected a wide range of Secretariat operations, from remote translation and text processing to high-speed electronic access to United Nations documents through the new optical disk system, which has served to reduce by thousands the number of documents to be printed and distributed.

16. Cutting across these three areas, managerial reform has been accelerated by the work of the Efficiency Board I established in November 1995. With guidance from the Board and support from a working group of experts contributed by Member States, every office in the Secretariat has carried out efficiency reviews, involving some 400 projects to enhance management efficiency in the Secretariat. The results achieved to date have contributed to the savings mandated by the General Assembly and to improvements in the services and operations of the Secretariat, and have served to identify a number of areas where further systemic efficiency changes are needed. These are currently being addressed by the Board.

17. Effective reform in a global institution such as the United Nations must be rooted in a broad consensus on the main features of the new global environment and on the role the Organization is called upon to play in such changing circumstances.

18. These principles have been the focus of another long-term effort given particular prominence during the past year: the series of global conferences from New York in 1990 to Istanbul in 1996. Undeniably, some of these conferences have been controversial. I believe that, equally undeniably, they have shown that a true international community is coming into being, perhaps for the first time in history, and that it can summon the will and the capacity to deal with issues that nations cannot take on separately nor, indeed, in any manner other than by agreed universal action.

19. The centuries-old practice of convening international conferences is being transformed into a new mechanism for international cooperation. The new conferences are revolutionary in both form and focus, and, while keeping costs to the minimum, they are producing concrete and far-reaching results.

20. These conferences have been democratic in form, bringing together, on a basis of equality, representatives of Governments from throughout the world, often at the highest political level. At the same time, they have brought world leaders together with representatives of civil society, from business people to trade unionists, academics, women's groups, professional associations, local authorities and non-governmental organizations of all types.

21. These conferences have also been democratic in focus and linked so as to foster global consensus on specific, interlocking global issues, by considering their impact on the human person and human communities. A great many of my efforts as Secretary-General have been devoted to ensuring that each conference — on children, the environment and development, human rights, the sustainable development of small island States, natural disaster reduction, population and development, social development, the advancement of women, international trade and development, and human settlements — would build upon its predecessors and carry forward a common human thrust. Together, they are producing cumulative results, offering all development actors — North and South, governmental and non-governmental, public and private — a pragmatic, cooperative and comprehensive approach to the key challenges now faced by every nation in the world and by all nations together.

22. The results are considerable, starting with hard-won consensus reached on a range of important points, such as the need for a new and equitable partnership among all States, developed and developing, and among government and civil society at all levels, to achieve sustainable development; the recognition of the right to development and of the mutually reinforcing relationship between development, democracy and respect for human rights; the necessity of linking demographic change to development policies; the need to adopt new and more comprehensive policies to address problems of poverty, unemployment and social disintegration as global problems requiring global attention; the importance of a shared approach to common urban crises; and the recognition of the advancement of women as a key to progress in the search for equality, development and peace.

23. Through the world conferences, consensus reached on these and other fundamental issues is translated into new international norms, agreements and specific commitments, into concrete goals and objectives set by Member States for themselves and for the United Nations. These are then integrated by Member States into national priorities and supported by the United Nations and other organizations through practical programmes and operational activities. Steps are being taken to ensure that the commitments being produced are followed up effectively and efficiently, on a thematic, not simply a conference-by-conference, basis.

24. For all development actors, the entire conference series has provided an opportunity to forge durable and productive partnerships in the face of new challenges. For the United Nations in particular, the conferences have produced a comprehensive agenda, which gives new direction to the work of the Organization and to the reform and strengthening of its development machinery. This has been supported by new arrangements for inter-secretariat coordination, agreed to by the Administrative Committee on Coordination. It has also helped to promote the revitalization of the Economic and Social Council as the key intergovernmental body for coordination. As part of this process of reform and revitalization, the intergovernmental structure of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and its secretariat and work programme have been streamlined and given a sharper focus. Cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions has been deepened further, as reflected in the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa. A leaner, more focused, better coordinated United Nations development system is coming into being, oriented to implementing programmes that reflect a broad political consensus on the priorities of development.

25. Even as the capacity of the United Nations to support development improves, the resources available to it for this purpose are decreasing. During the year the flow of voluntary resources into the United Nations funds and programmes declined. Overall, the flow of official development assistance from countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1995 declined in absolute terms to $59 billion and as a percentage of gross national product to 0.27 per cent, a level far below the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent. Thus, for the economic and social sector, this was a year when the capacity to act effectively improved, but the means to do so declined.

26. The current cycle of global conferences came to a close with the ninth session of UNCTAD and Habitat II. The authority to convene additional world conferences lies with the General Assembly. The work of the past six-year conference series could be enhanced further should the Assembly decide to perform, on a continuing basis, the role that the new world conferences have played so far. The Assembly could decide to oversee and promote action to

follow up the conferences that have already been held. It could deal with new global issues as they arise, comprehensively and at the political levels necessary, with the participation of civil society. Finally, the General Assembly would also need to take measures to ensure that the progress already made is not reversed, nor the promise spoiled by the precarious financial situation of the United Nations, which in recent years has proved to be an obstacle to the fundamental work, reform and revitalization of the Organization.

27. Whatever the mechanism the Member States decide upon to deal with shared global problems, the will to do so will be absolutely essential if the substantial recent achievements of the United Nations are to be consolidated and if a compelling vision for its future is to be fulfilled.

II

Coordinating a comprehensive strategy and strengthening administrative structures

A. Organs of the United Nations

28. While discharging their heavy work loads, the organs of the United Nations have adjusted their work programmes throughout the year, achieving greater efficiency within existing resources.

1. General Assembly

29. The fiftieth session of the General Assembly was marked by the largest ever gathering of world leaders, who pledged to give the twenty-first century a United Nations equipped, financed and structured to serve effectively the peoples of the world in whose name it was established. Member States and observers adopted the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations, which focused on peace, development, equality, justice and the work of the world Organization.

30. A three-day special commemorative meeting for the fiftieth anniversary, held from 22 to 24 October 1995, was addressed by 200 speakers, including 91 Heads of State, 8 vice-presidents, one crown prince, 37 prime ministers, 10 deputy prime ministers, 21 foreign ministers, 9 chairmen of delegations and 23 observers. Most speakers called for a revitalization of the General Assembly, an expansion of the Security Council and the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council. They also stressed that Member States should meet, in full and on time, their obligation to bear the expenses of the Organization.

31. The assembled world leaders also pledged themselves to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes, reaffirmed the right to self-determination of all peoples, called for extraordinary measures by all countries to confront extreme poverty, reiterated the equal rights of men and women and reaffirmed that all human rights were universal and indivisible.

32. At the opening of the special commemorative meeting, I stressed the potential of the United Nations to help the world deal with the problems it will confront in the twenty-first century. The United Nations could not, however, fulfil this role if the present trend continued and the Organization was not given the resources required to accomplish the tasks imposed. I appealed to world leaders to give the United Nations a firm financial base, thus demonstrating their confidence in the Organization.

33. At the close of the meeting, I observed that the world leaders had expressed confidence in the future of the United Nations. They had given the world an "agenda for tomorrow", covering every aspect of human society. The dialogue of nations sought by the founders of the world Organization had taken place in friendship and fraternity — the "spirit of San Francisco" had lived again and should guide the international community during the next 50 years.

34. In a special address to the General Assembly on 5 October 1995, His Holiness Pope John Paul II called for a common effort "to build a civilization of love, founded on the universal values of peace, solidarity, justice and liberty", to answer the fear that darkened human existence at the end of the twentieth century. He also said that the United Nations had to rise above the cold status of an administrative institution and become a "moral centre" where all the nations of the world develop a shared awareness of being a family of nations.

35. During the year, the General Assembly addressed an expanded agenda, covering a wide range of political, economic, social, humanitarian and disarmament matters, as well as legal, administrative and budgetary questions. Reform and the financial situation of the United Nations were the dominant themes throughout the fiftieth session.

36. The open-ended working groups of the General Assembly — on Security Council reform, an Agenda for Peace, an Agenda for Development, the financial situation of the United Nations and the strengthening of the United Nations system — have worked intensively during the year to improve the effectiveness of the Organization. These working groups held numerous formal meetings and several informal consultations, which required substantive and

Table 1

Meetings and informal consultations by working groups of the General Assembly, 19 September 1995-31 July 1996

Name of working group	*Number of meetings*	*Number of informal consultations*	*Total*
Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council	38	11	49
Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on an Agenda for Development	4	56	60
High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations	30		30
Informal Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on an Agenda for Peace	4	22	
Four subgroups	56	—	
	60	22	82
Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System	44	—	44
Total	**176**	**89**	**265**

technical support, provided by the Secretariat from within its scarce resources (see table 1). The working groups are scheduled to submit their reports to the Assembly before the end of its fiftieth session.

37. The adoption of General Assembly resolution 50/227 on further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields will lead to a more efficient division of labour between the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, helping, in particular, to eliminate duplication of work in reports to those organs. It should also bring new momentum to the reform efforts under way throughout the United Nations system. The General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to implement further measures for restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields falling within my responsibility.

38. The agenda for the fiftieth session of the General Assembly comprised 169 items, a slight increase from 164 items in the previous session (see fig. 1). This low rate of growth can be credited in part to the continuous effort at biennialization or triennialization. However, the need for further rationalization of items is evident. It is encouraging that Assembly resolution 50/227 highlighted the need for the Second and Third Committees to promote greater coherence and complementarity in their work. Improved coordination of the two Committees' agendas will no doubt lead to a more economic provision of the services required by the General Assembly.

39. The number of mandated reports continues to increase. In addition to the reports of the principal organs and their subsidiary bodies, more than 270 reports of the Secretary-General were issued at the fiftieth session, not including several reports of special rapporteurs, the Joint Inspection Unit and the Office of Internal Oversight Services. The Organization will continue its effort to produce all reports in as timely and efficient a manner as possible. But given the frequency with which the General Assembly, other principal organs and their subsidiary bodies now meet, every effort should be made to control the number of reports, whose production has in recent years put an increasingly severe strain on the Secretariat, both in human and financial terms.

40. During its fiftieth session, the General Assembly, its General Committee and Main Committees held 393 meetings, compared with a total of 384 during the forty-ninth session and 401 during the forty-eighth; informal meetings and consultations totalled 296, compared with 266

Figure 1
General Assembly resolutions and agenda items, 1990-1996

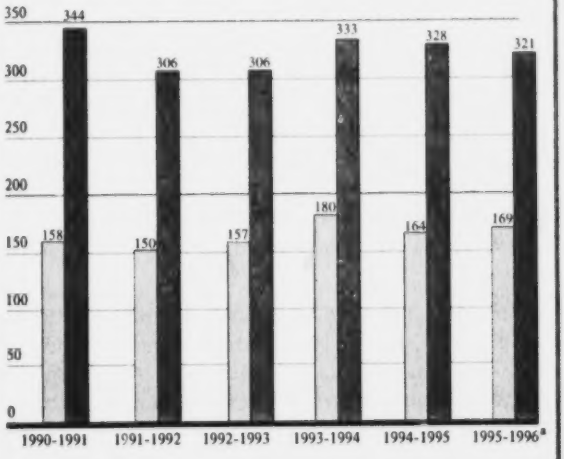
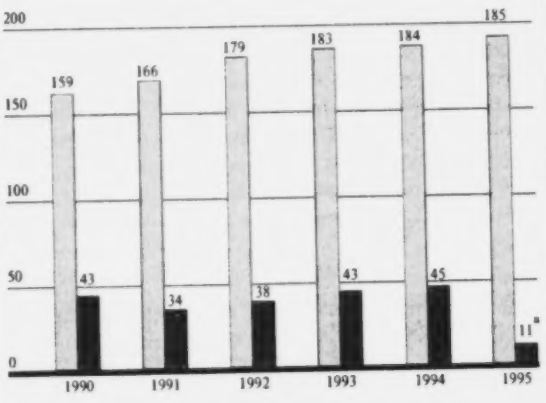


Figure 2
Participation of Heads of State or Government in the general debate of the General Assembly, 1990-1995



[a] One hundred and thirty-seven Heads of State or Government participated in the special commemorative meeting of the General Assembly held from 22 to 24 October 1995 on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

during the forty-ninth session; and the working groups of the Assembly held 292 meetings, compared with 163 during the previous session. As at 31 July 1996, the Assembly had adopted 321 resolutions during the fiftieth session, of which 251, or 78 per cent, were adopted without a vote or by consensus. During the forty-ninth session, 328 resolutions were adopted, of which 260, or 79 per cent, were adopted without a vote or by consensus. Owing to the high level of participation by world leaders in the historic special commemorative meeting, only 11 Heads of State and Government, or 5 per cent of the membership, took part in the general debate of the fiftieth session, compared with 45, or 24 per cent, in that of the forty-ninth session (see fig. 2).

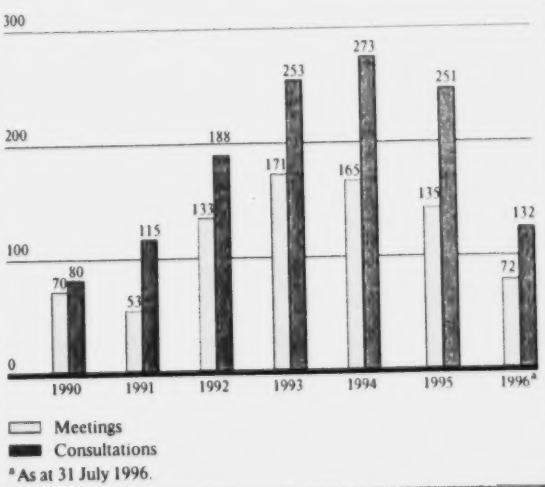
2. Security Council

41. During the period under review, the Security Council continued to meet on an intensive basis to consider appropriate action in response to threats to international peace and security, to adopt various measures aimed at controlling and resolving conflicts, and to muster regional and international support for those measures (see fig. 3).

42. The general trend in the Security Council towards consensus-building also continued. Only one draft resolution, dealing with the situation in the Middle East (Lebanon), was not adopted owing to the lack of the required votes in its favour. Compared with a similar period last year, there was a slight decrease, from 131 to 106, in the number of formal meetings. Likewise, there was a decrease in the number of consultations of the whole of the Council, from 226 to 189. The number of resolutions decreased from 63 to 51, as did the number of presidential statements, from 64 to 49 (see figs. 4 and 5).

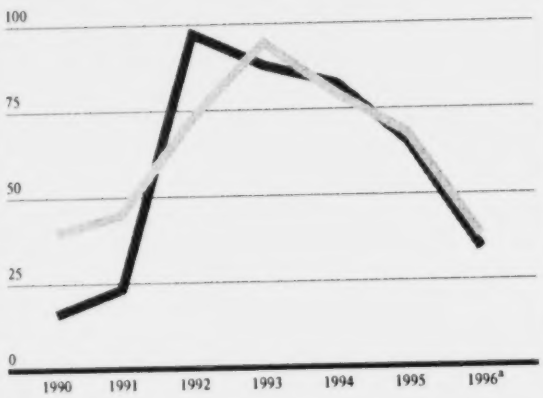
43. The Security Council adopted a total of 19 resolutions on issues dealing with Africa and reached agreement on 17 presidential statements on African questions. Of the six peace-keeping missions which the Council has authorized in Africa, the operations in Angola, Liberia and Western Sahara remain. Since the withdrawal of the United Nations Operation in Somalia II as a result of the lack of political will on the part of Somali parties, the Council has continued to monitor the situation in that country from the Nairobi-based United Nations Political Office for Somalia. After the termination of the peace-keeping mission in Rwanda, the Government of that Member State requested a small political office at Kigali, the United Nations Office in Rwanda, but it has not yet proved possible to establish such an office. The threatening situation in Burundi remained a major preoccupation of the

Figure 3
Security Council:
formal meetings and consultations of the whole, 1990-1996



[a] As at 31 July 1996.

Figure 4
Security Council:
resolutions and presidential statements,
1990-1996



[a]As at 31 July 1996.

Council, which also paid close attention to the efforts of the international community to end the conflict in Sierra Leone. The Council has consequently attached great importance to the continuation of mediation efforts as well as efforts to convene a regional conference for peace, security and development in the Great Lakes region, with a view to a global settlement of existing problems.

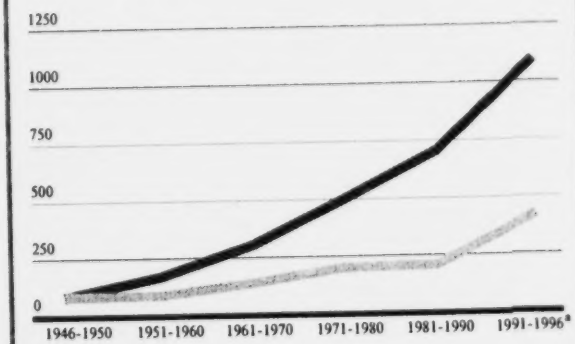
44. In its deliberations on African questions, the Security Council continued to cooperate closely with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). In support of the efforts of the OAU, the Council also adopted two resolutions concerning the extradition to Ethiopia of the suspects wanted in connection with the attempted assassination of President Mubarak of Egypt in June 1995. The Council also issued a presidential statement on 12 April 1996 welcoming the signature of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (the Pelindaba Treaty).

45. The Security Council adopted 17 resolutions and reached agreement on 15 presidential statements concerning the former Yugoslavia. Following the signing of peace agreements in November 1995, the Council took a number of actions which led to a substantial reduction of the large United Nations peace-keeping presence in the region. Both the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia, known as UNCRO, were terminated, and the Council's almost daily involvement with conflicts in the former Yugoslavia diminished. None the less, the Council remains actively seized of the matter.

46. With regard to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Security Council welcomed the initialling, on 10 November 1995, of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Annexes thereto, or the Dayton Agreement, and a month later authorized Member States to establish a multinational Implementation Force (IFOR) in order to fulfil the role specified in Annex 1-A and Annex 2 of the Agreement. To coordinate with IFOR in the implementation of the civilian aspects of the Dayton Agreement, the Council established a United Nations civilian office under the authority of the Secretary-General, the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH), and its International Police Task Force. The Council remained apprised of the activities of IFOR through the monthly reports by the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the periodic reports of the High Representative.

47. With regard to Croatia, the Security Council welcomed the Basic Agreement on the Region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium, signed on 12 November 1995 between the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the local Serb representatives, and

Figure 5
Security Council:
resolutions adopted since 1946



[a]As at 31 July 1996.

later established the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) to carry out the demilitarization aspects of the Basic Agreement and to achieve a peaceful reintegration of the region into the Croatian constitutional system. The Council also authorized United Nations military observers formerly with UNCRO to continue to monitor the demilitarization of the Prevlaka peninsula as the United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka (UNMOP).

48. In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP). In addition, the Council continued to monitor violations of international humanitarian law in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the humanitarian and human rights situation in Croatia, and to support the work of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia.

49. In its consideration of agenda items dealing with the Americas, the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) to assist the Haitian authorities in sustaining a secure and stable environment that had been established by the peace-keeping operation and to professionalize the new Haitian National Police. When UNMIH came to an end, the Council established the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti (UNSMIH) to assist the Government of Haiti in improving the professionalization of the police and in the maintenance of a secure and stable environment conducive to the success of the current effort to establish and train an effective national police force. Following the shooting down of two civil aircraft by the Cuban air force in February, the President of the Security Council made a statement on 27 February strongly deploring the incident and recalling that, according to international law, States must refrain from the use of weapons against civil aircraft in flight and must not endanger the lives of persons on board and the safety of aircraft.

50. The Security Council has continued to rely on sanctions as a means of ensuring compliance by the target State with the relevant resolutions of the Council. Following its adoption of resolution 1054 (1996), imposing diplomatic and certain other restrictions on the Sudan, eight sanctions regimes are currently in place. The economic sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Bosnian Serb party were suspended following the signing of the Dayton Agreement, and the arms embargo applicable to all the constituent republics of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has been lifted with the exception of heavy armaments and certain other related items. The value of sanctions as a means of conflict resolution was amply demonstrated in the former Yugoslavia, where the conclusion of peace accords has been facilitated by the effective implementation of a sanctions regime. In this connection, the close cooperation and contribution of relevant regional organizations to the monitoring and enforcement of the sanctions regime has been a major contributing element to its success.

51. In November 1995, I informed the President of the Security Council that the backlog in processing humanitarian applications submitted to the relevant sanctions committees had been eliminated. I have since taken further steps to streamline the work of the secretariat of the sanctions committees so as to ensure that humanitarian applications are processed at an ever faster pace, thus allowing for supplies to reach the needy civilian populations without delay. As recommended by the Security Council, several measures have been adopted by various sanctions committees to increase the transparency of their working procedures, including the issuance of press releases after each meeting and the submission of annual reports to the Council on their activities (see table 2).

Table 2

Security Council: meetings held by sanctions committees, 1990-1996

Committee (Security Council resolution)	*1990*	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996**	*Total*
South Africa (421 (1977))	8	3	6	4	1	—	—	22
Iraq (661 (1990))	22	37	24	22	13	11	12	141
Yugoslavia (724 (1991))	—	1	47	46	22	23	2	141
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (748 (1992))	—	—	14	19	14	16	6	69
Somalia (751 (1992))	—	—	4	3	2	1	1	11
Haiti (841 (1993))	—	—	—	6	4	—	—	10
Angola (864 (1993))	—	—	—	4	3	1	2	10
Rwanda (918 (1994))	—	—	—	—	1	3	1	5
Liberia (985 (1995))	—	—	—	—	—	2	1	3
Total meetings for period 1990-1996								**412**

* As at 31 July 1996.

52. The ideas concerning sanctions outlined in "An Agenda for Peace" and its Supplement are being actively discussed in various United Nations forums, and my report to the General Assembly on the implementation of the provisions of the Charter related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions was received positively by Member States and led to the adoption of Assembly resolution 50/51. Pursuant to paragraphs 3 and 4 of that resolution, appropriate arrangements have been made in the Secretariat to carry out, in a coordinated way among the various departments, the tasks entrusted to the Secretariat by the resolution. Member States are urged to continue to explore further measures to enhance the effectiveness of sanctions and to eliminate, to the extent possible, their unintended negative effects on the civilian population of the target State and on neighbouring and other affected States.

53. In this connection, following the signing on 20 May 1996 of the memorandum of understanding between the Secretariat of the United Nations and the Government of Iraq on the implementation of Security Council resolution 986 (1995), a well-coordinated effort was made by many departments of the Secretariat to put in place the complex practical arrangements required to implement the resolution. The Security Council sanctions committee for Iraq has cleared the way for implementation to begin and for much-needed relief to be thus provided to the affected civilian population of Iraq.

54. The Security Council continued to respond to the concerns of Member States for greater transparency in its work. On the basis of the *aide-mémoire* submitted by France concerning the working methods of the Council as well as a presidential statement noting, *inter alia*, that it was the intention of the Council that there should be an increased recourse to open meetings, in particular at an early stage in the Council's consideration of a subject, the Council held a number of open meetings dealing with consultation and exchange of information with troop-contributing countries and the situations in Afghanistan, Angola, Liberia and Somalia.

55. With the same purpose of increasing transparency, the Security Council agreed on a presidential statement on 28 March 1996 concerning its review of arrangements for consultation and exchange of information with troop-contributing countries. A note by the President was issued on 24 January 1996 containing the Council's decision to remove four matters from the list of matters of which the Security Council is seized. On 30 July, another note by the President was issued, and subsequently reissued, setting out the Council's decision on a procedure for deletion of items that had not been considered by the Council in formal meetings in the preceding five years. In the light of the comments made by several Members of the Organization, in another note by the President, the procedure was further elaborated upon by the Council.

56. As may be recalled, the General Assembly has requested that high priority be given to the *Répertoire of the Practice of the Security Council* and the *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs*. Despite the efforts made by the Secretariat over the past year, the backlog in updating these publications has remained largely unresolved, primarily because of the Organization's ongoing financial crisis.

3. Economic and Social Council

57. The Economic and Social Council held its substantive session from 24 June to 26 July 1996 in New York. The Council's high-level segment dealt with an issue of priority on the international agenda: "International cooperation against the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotics and related activities". The deliberations revealed a significant degree of policy consensus, particularly on the need for a balanced approach to international drug control, giving equal importance to supply-and-demand reduction aspects. The Council recognized the critical role of the United Nations in addressing the global drug threat, while reaffirming the leadership and coordination role of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme in this area, and calling for coordinated action at all levels. The segment included a policy dialogue on major issues in the world economy with the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Deputy Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund and the Managing Director of the World Bank.

58. The coordination segment of the Economic and Social Council focused on coordination of United Nations system activities for poverty eradication, a priority common to recent major international conferences. The Agreed Conclusions appeal for a substantial increase in resources for operational activities and urge that an appropriate share of aid and budgetary resources be devoted to the social sector. They call for a further expansion and improvement of coordination of United Nations system operational activities for poverty eradication at the country and headquarters levels, by making better use of existing coordination mechanisms, and for further efforts to develop a common country assessment, and further strengthening of collaboration between the Bretton Woods institutions and the rest of the United Nations system. The Agreed Conclusions establish a clearer and closer working relationship between the Council and its functional commissions on the one hand and, on the other hand,

between the Administrative Committee on Coordination and its inter-agency mechanisms for integrated support for conferences follow-up. They indicate how the intergovernmental dialogue on poverty eradication should be structured to provide coherent guidance to the United Nations system, from headquarters to the field: the Council, the central intergovernmental mechanism for coordinating United Nations system activities for poverty eradication, will support the General Assembly in its establishment of the broad policy framework for poverty eradication and discuss issues of an enabling environment in the economic, social and related fields; its functional commissions should support the work of the Council by addressing poverty eradication from their particular perspective and within their own mandate, given due attention to cross-cutting themes, such as basic social services, productive employment, vulnerability, social integration and participation, and statistical aspects. Finally, the coordination segment addressed, in the context of the coordinated follow-up to major conferences and summits, measures to support the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into poverty eradication activities. For its part, the Council will ensure that its future monitoring of United Nations system activities in poverty eradication reflects a gender perspective.

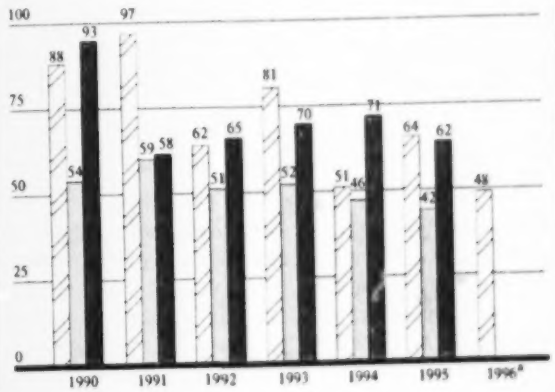
59. The high-level part of the operational activities segment took place on 28 June and focused on strengthening collaboration between the United Nations development system and the Bretton Woods institutions, against the background of General Assembly resolution 50/227 of 24 May 1996, which is described below in greater detail. The Council agreed on a number of specific provisions for strengthened collaboration, particularly with respect to future Council meetings. In its review of the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/120 on the follow-up to the policy recommendation of the General Assembly on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development, the Council addressed a range of issues concerning the functioning of the resident coordinator system, harmonization and common premises, as well as monitoring and evaluation. The consideration of the report was supplemented by a dialogue with executive heads of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), as well as United Nations system country teams from Egypt and Malawi. It resulted in the adoption by the Council on 26 July 1996 of resolution 1996/42, which provides further guidance to the United Nations, its funds and programmes and other organizations of the United Nations system involved in international development cooperation.

60. The Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 1996/48 on new and innovative ideas for generating funds, requesting the Secretary-General to submit a report on all aspects of new and innovative ideas for generating funds for globally agreed commitments and priorities and to review the feasibility, as well as the cost benefits, of their implementation. Governments are invited to submit their written views on the subject to the Secretary-General to be communicated in the context of his report. The matter will be considered at the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in 1997 and in the General Assembly at its fifty-second session that same year.

61. A major highlight of the Economic and Social Council's 1996 substantive session was the adoption of resolution 1996/31 on the consultative relationship between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations. This resolution, which updates Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968 on the matter, is the outcome of well over two and a half years of intergovernmental negotiations, motivated by experience gained during the process of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Governments chose to incorporate in the resolution three key elements which were originally suggested in the report of the Secretary-General on the review of arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations, including: the recognition of the importance and growth of national, regional and subregional non-governmental organizations (whereas the 1968 resolution focuses principally on international non-governmental organizations); the broadening of the role of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations; and the adoption of standard rules for the participation of non-governmental organizations in United Nations international conferences and their preparatory processes. By its decision 1996/297 on non-governmental organizations, the Economic and Social Council decided to recommend that the General Assembly examine, at its fifty-first session, the question of the participation of non-governmental organizations in all areas of the work of the United Nations. This marked the first time in the history of the Organization that the General Assembly received a recommendation to look into the question of participation of non-governmental organizations.

62. The adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 50/227 on further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields should, as mentioned above, lead to a more efficient division of labour between the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (see fig. 6). By way of this resolution, Member States reached agreement on measures which reconfirm the validity of the role of the United Nations in operational activities for development; foster better coordination and harmonization of the work of the Second and Third Committees of the

Figure 6
Resolutions adopted by the Economic and Social Council and the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly, 1990-1996



[a]As at 31 July 1996.

General Assembly; strengthen the capacity of the Economic and Social Council to serve as a central mechanism for coordination of the activities of the United Nations system and its specialized agencies and for supervision of its subsidiary bodies, in particular its functional commissions, in the economic, social and related fields; and aim to further reinforce cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions. In this resolution the Assembly also launched an important series of reviews to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the subsidiary bodies of the Council.

63. My statement of 11 March 1996 to the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System emphasized two priority requirements for the revitalization of the Economic and Social Council: ministerial participation and increasing involvement of the new players on the global scene in the high-level segment; and further action to enable the Council to exercise an effective role of governance over all the operational funds and programmes of the Organization. In my statement to the Economic and Social Council on 24 July 1996, I noted that ongoing efforts to reform the Council have produced significant improvements in its functioning, but that further efforts are required to increase the capacity of the Council to monitor and coordinate the work of the United Nations system.

64. The Economic and Social Council has taken a number of actions this year to implement some of the provisions contained in General Assembly resolution 50/227 reflected, *inter alia*, in its resolution 1996/43 on strengthening collaboration between the United Nations development system and the Bretton Woods institutions and resolution 1996/41 on follow-up to General Assembly resolution 50/227: initiation of reviews. Also encouraging is the fact that the Council has decided to hold a resumed substantive session this year to undertake a review of its agenda. For my part, I shall continue to implement the further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields falling within my responsibilities, as set out in resolution 50/227. Full implementation of resolution 50/227 by the Secretary-General and the relevant intergovernmental bodies will contribute to the continuing revitalization of the Economic and Social Council and enable the Council to play the role envisaged for it in the Charter.

65. The Commission for Social Development held a special session in May 1996 to consider the future role of the Commission in the light of the World Summit for Social Development and strategies and actions for the eradication of poverty, giving special attention to the formulation of integrated strategies, meeting the basic human needs of all, and promotion of self-reliance and community-based initiatives. The Commission recommended, and the Economic and Social Council approved, both an increase in Commission membership from 32 to 46 and annualization of its sessions. By the same resolution, the Council decided that the Commission should have the primary responsibility for the follow-up to and review of implementation of the World Summit and approved a multi-year work plan. The Council also agreed to a recommendation to ensure high-level representation in the Commission and greater participation of experts in its work.

66. The Special Rapporteur on Disability of the Commission for Social Development, Bengt Lindqvist, supported by extrabudgetary donations, undertook missions to six countries, each from a different region, to confer with government officials, national focal points on disability and other concerned non-governmental organizations, and to conduct workshops on the Standard Rules for the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. A questionnaire sent to Governments and non-governmental organizations regarding the implementation of the Standard Rules received a very positive response. The Special Rapporteur will present his complete findings to the Commission at its thirty-fifth session in 1997.

67. For the Commission on the Status of Women and the programme on the advancement of women, ensuring effective follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on

Women will be the central objective over the next four years. However, initial activities by the Commission were hindered by the cancellation, owing to the financial crisis, of two expert groups scheduled to prepare substantive recommendations for the Commission related to that objective. The Commission decided instead to organize substantive discussions through a series of dialogues, each of which would begin with an expert panel. Two of the dialogues focused on subjects which had been scheduled to have expert groups — women and the media, and child and dependent care. A third dialogue, on women and poverty eradication, was added at the request of the Commission's Bureau. The results of the experiment were considered successful by the Commission, which decided to use this method of work over the next few years.

68. The Commission on Sustainable Development at its fourth session concluded its first Multi-Year Thematic Programme of Work, which allowed it to consider in-depth progress at national and international levels in the implementation of all the chapters of Agenda 21. The Commission also carried out the initial review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States adopted in Barbados in 1994. Another important development was the establishment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, which met twice and is expected to elaborate recommendations on the entire forest-related agenda for submission to the Commission at its 1997 session.

4. Trusteeship Council

69. The item entitled "Review of the role of the Trusteeship Council" was included in the agenda of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly at the request of Malta. On 11 December 1995, the Assembly adopted resolution 50/55 without a vote, by which it requested me to invite Member States to submit, not later than 31 May 1996, written comments on the future of the Trusteeship Council. The Assembly also requested that the Secretary-General submit, as early as possible and before the end of the fiftieth session, a report containing comments made by Member States on that subject. As at 21 June 1996, 19 Member States had submitted comments.

70. In my 1994 annual report on the work of the Organization, I recommended that the General Assembly proceed with steps to eliminate the Trusteeship Council, in accordance with Article 108 of the Charter. As I stated in my 1995 report and reiterate here, I regret that no decision to abolish the organ has been taken.

5. International Court of Justice

71. This year the International Court of Justice, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. On 18 April 1996, 50 years from the Court's inaugural sitting in 1946, a ceremonial sitting was held in the presence of Her Majesty Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands. Addresses were given by the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, Mr. Hans van Mierlo, and by the President of the Court, Judge Mohammed Bedjaoui. A two-day colloquium preceded the sitting, organized in cooperation with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), on the theme: "Increasing the Effectiveness of the International Court of Justice", reflecting the Court's awareness that its present heavy case-load, combined with recent cut-backs in its staff, required a review of its procedures. The Rules Committee of the Court is now engaged in such a review.

72. During the past year, the Court had pending 12 contentious cases and two requests for an advisory opinion. Two new contentious cases were brought before the Court, while two others were removed from the General List. Preliminary objections were raised in one case. To manage this heavy case-load, the Court has been deliberating on three cases simultaneously.

73. During the period under review, the Court delivered two advisory opinions, rendered a Judgment on preliminary objections in another case, and issued an Order in which it dismissed a request made by a State to "examine the situation" as referred to in an earlier Judgment of 1974. In a fifth case, the Court issued an Order indicating provisional measures. In addition, some Orders were made concerning time-limits. Hearings were held in five cases. Following is a summary of the activities of the Court in relation to 11 of the 14 cases on its docket during the past year, and to the requests for an advisory opinion.

74. In August 1995, New Zealand submitted to the Court a request for an examination of the situation "arising out of a proposed action announced by France which will, if carried out, affect the basis of the Judgment rendered by the Court on 20 December 1974 in the *Nuclear Tests Case* (*New Zealand* v. *France*)". The request referred to a media statement of 13 June 1995 by the President of France, which said that "France would conduct a final series of eight nuclear weapons tests in the South Pacific starting in September 1995". According to New Zealand, its request was made "under the right granted to New Zealand in paragraph 63 of the Judgment of 20 December 1974". On the same day, New Zealand filed a "Further Request for the Indication of Provisional Measures". Australia, the

Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Samoa and Solomon Islands applied for permission to intervene.

75. At the invitation of the President of the Court, New Zealand and France presented *aides-mémoire* on the legal nature of the requests made by New Zealand and of their effects. The Court held a hearing on 11 and 12 September, and in its Order of 22 September it found, by 12 votes to 3, that New Zealand's request did not fall within the provisions of the said paragraph 63 and had consequently to be dismissed. The request for provisional measures and the applications for permission to intervene were also dismissed.

76. On the same day, 22 September 1995, the Court issued Orders in the cases concerning *Questions of Interpretation and Application of the 1971 Montreal Convention arising from the Aerial Incident at Lockerbie* (*Libyan Arab Jamahiriya v. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*) and *Questions of Interpretation and Application of the 1971 Montreal Convention arising from the Aerial Incident at Lockerbie* (*Libyan Arab Jamahiriya v. United States of America*), in which the time-limit was fixed for the presentation by Libya of its observations and submissions on the preliminary objections, raised in June 1995, by the United Kingdom and the United States, respectively.

77. In October/November 1995, the Court held hearings concerning the request by the World Health Organization (WHO) for an advisory opinion on the question of the *Legality of the Use by a State of Nuclear Weapons in Armed Conflict*, and the request submitted by the United Nations General Assembly on the question of the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*. An exceptionally large number of States, besides the World Health Organization, made statements during those hearings, as they had done in written form earlier in the proceedings.

78. Interrupted by matters relating to the cases on its docket, described below, the Court was unable to render its advisory opinions until 8 July 1996. In the case concerning *Legality of the Use by a State of Nuclear Weapons in Armed Conflict*, the Court found, by 11 votes to 3, that it was not able to give the advisory opinion requested because the request for such an opinion submitted by WHO did not relate to a question which arose "within the scope of (the) activities" of that organization.

79. In the case concerning the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*, the Court decided, by 13 votes to 1, to comply with the request for an advisory opinion made by the General Assembly. The Court found, unanimously, that there is in neither customary nor conventional international law any specific authorization, and, by 11 votes to 3, that neither is there any comprehensive and universal prohibition, of the threat or use of nuclear weapons as such. The Court found, unanimously, that a threat or use of force by means of nuclear weapons that is contrary to Article 2, paragraph 4, of the United Nations Charter and that fails to meet all the requirements of Article 51 is unlawful. The Court found, unanimously, that a threat or use of nuclear weapons should also be compatible with the requirements of the international law applicable in armed conflict, particularly those of the principles and rules of international humanitarian law, as well as with specific obligations under treaties and other undertakings which expressly deal with nuclear weapons. By 7 votes to 7, by the President's casting vote, the Court found that it follows from the above-mentioned requirements that the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law, but that in view of the current state of international law, and of the elements of fact at its disposal, the Court could not conclude definitively whether the threat or use of nuclear weapons would be lawful or unlawful in an extreme circumstance of self-defence, in which the very survival of a State would be at stake. Finally, the Court found, unanimously, that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

80. In the case concerning *Maritime Delimitation between Guinea-Bissau and Senegal* (*Guinea Bissau v. Senegal*), Guinea-Bissau confirmed to the Court, in November 1995, that by virtue of the agreement reached by the Parties in the case, it had decided to discontinue the proceedings. With Senegal having confirmed that it agreed to the discontinuance, the Court, by an Order of 8 November 1995, placed the discontinuance on record and directed that the case be removed from the list.

81. In February 1996, the two Parties in the case concerning the *Aerial Incident of 3 July 1988* (*Islamic Republic of Iran v. United States of America*) jointly informed the Court that they had reached a settlement. The Court issued an Order recording the discontinuance of the proceedings and directing the removal of the case from the Court's list.

82. Earlier in February, the Court's deliberations on the advisory opinions had been interrupted by the request from Cameroon for the indication of provisional measures in the case concerning the *Land and Maritime Boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria* (*Cameroon v. Nigeria*). In that case, preliminary objections to the jurisdiction of the Court and to the admissibility of the claims of Cameroon had been filed by Nigeria in December 1995; and by an Order of 10 January 1996, the Court had fixed a time-limit for the presentation by Cameroon of observations and submissions

thereon. Hearings on the request for provisional measures were held in the beginning of March 1996. On 15 March, the Court handed down its Order indicating that both Parties should observe the agreement reached between the Ministers for Foreign Affairs at Kara, Togo, on 17 February 1996, to cease all hostilities in the Bakassi peninsula; ensure that the presence of any armed forces in the peninsula did not extend beyond the positions in which they were situated prior to 3 February 1996; take all necessary steps to conserve evidence relevant to the case within the disputed area; and lend every assistance to the fact-finding mission which the Secretary-General of the United Nations had proposed to send to the Bakassi peninsula.

83. At the end of April, the Court began hearings started on the preliminary objections raised by Yugoslavia in the case concerning *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro))*. On 11 July, the Court delivered its Judgment, rejecting, by 14 votes to 1, the preliminary objections raised by Yugoslavia (except for the fifth preliminary objection, which was rejected by 11 votes to 4), and finding, by 13 votes to 2, that it had jurisdiction to deal with the case on the basis of article IX of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The Court dismissed, by 14 votes to 1, the additional bases of jurisdiction invoked by Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Court further found, by 13 votes to 2, that the application filed by Bosnia and Herzegovina was admissible. Following that Judgment, the President of the Court fixed a time-limit for the filing of the counter-memorial by Yugoslavia.

84. Meanwhile, in the *Fisheries Jurisdiction Case (Spain v. Canada)*, the memorial of Spain and the counter-memorial of Canada on the question of the jurisdiction of the Court to entertain the above case had been deposited within the time-limits of 29 September 1995 and 29 February 1996, respectively, as fixed by the Order of the President of the Court, dated 2 May 1995. The Spanish Government subsequently expressed its wish to be authorized to file a reply; the Government of Canada opposed this. By an Order of 8 May 1996, the Court, considering that it was "sufficiently informed, at this stage, of the contentions of fact and law on which the Parties rely with respect to its jurisdiction in the case and whereas the presentation by them of other written pleadings on that question therefore does not appear necessary", decided not to authorize the filing of a reply by the applicant and a rejoinder by the respondent on the question of jurisdiction, reserving the subsequent procedure for further decision.

85. Also in May 1996, Botswana and Namibia jointly notified the Court of a Special Agreement concluded between them for submission to the Court of their dispute concerning the boundary around Kasikili/Sedudu Island and the legal status of that island. In June, the Court issued an Order fixing time-limits for the filing of a memorial and of a counter-memorial by each of the Parties.

86. In addition to the cases and requests for an advisory opinion described above, the following three cases were on the docket of the Court during the period under review:

(a) *Maritime Delimitation and Territorial Questions between Qatar and Bahrain (Qatar v. Bahrain);*

(b) *Oil Platforms (Islamic Republic of Iran v. United States of America);*

(c) *Gabcíkovo-Nagymaros Project (Hungary/Slovakia).*

87. The vacancy left by the death, on 24 October 1995, of Judge Andrés Aguilar Mawdsley (Venezuela) was filled by the election, on 28 February 1996, of Mr. Gonzalo Parra-Aranguren (Venezuela).

6. Secretariat

88. During the period under review, considerable progress has been made in the implementation of my comprehensive management reform plan, the details of which were set out in last year's annual report. The effort to transform the United Nations into a mission-driven, result-oriented Organization — showing enhanced performance, improved productivity and increased cost-effectiveness — is well under way.

89. Efforts at managerial reform have targeted four strategic areas of management — the Organization's cost structure, human resources, information and technology — along with a fifth strategic area, the Organization's work programme. This fifth area may best be understood as an element not of managerial reform, which is primarily under the responsibility of the Secretary-General, but of organizational reform, which deals with the simplification of Secretariat structures and the rationalization of both the multiplicity of programmes and funds and their relationship with the Secretariat; as such, it is a joint responsibility of the Secretary-General and Member States. Accomplishments and advances have been made in all five areas. Conditions for further improvements have been created, and the process continues.

90. Improvement in the management of the Organization's cost structure has been a major focus in the past year, during which I proposed and the General Assembly approved the Organization's first-ever zero nominal growth programme budget. However, the $2,608 million in approved appropriations for the biennium 1996-1997 included $154 million in cost reductions mandated by

the General Assembly beyond the $98 million in reductions already indicated in my proposed biennium budget. By its resolution 50/215, the Assembly had decided that these additional reductions of $154 million, including the $50 million reduction as a result of an increase in the budgeted vacancy rate, would have to be achieved within the biennium. At the same time, the Assembly requested me, in proposing reductions, to ensure a fair, equitable and non-selective treatment of all budget sections and emphasized that programme delivery should be achieved in the most effective and cost-efficient manner, while continuing the full implementation of all mandated activities. Later in the year, the Organization was also asked to absorb, within the approved level of appropriations, some $35 million in new unbudgeted mandates. Inevitably, these increased budgetary constraints, coupled with constant uncertainty as to the availability of resources, have affected the overall effort at managerial reform.

91. In seeking to achieve the mandated reductions, I adopted a two-phased approach. First, programme managers were requested to review their programmes and activities and to indicate both how the resource reductions could be achieved and what their programmatic impact would be. Second, a distinct but complementary process was set in motion, involving a series of efficiency reviews, to improve the performance and efficiency of activities of the Organization.

92. The first phase of this approach has necessarily required reductions in and redeployment of staff. Coupled with the financial crisis, this has imposed new tasks on the Office of Human Resources Management, even as its own workforce has been reduced while, at the same time, required to continue to deliver its other mandated programmes and activities. The Office, with the cooperation of programme managers and in consultation with staff representatives, has had to develop new mechanisms or build on existing mechanisms in order to redeploy staff, separate staff voluntarily, and minimize involuntary separations. The aim has been to meet required reductions while preserving the important organizational investment in staff development and maximizing the deployment of staff on board to positions where they can continue to contribute to the work of the global Secretariat.

93. From a high of 12,205 posts approved in the 1984-1985 programme budget, the global workforce under the 1996-1997 programme budget now stands at the level of 10,159 posts. Some 1,000 posts are being kept vacant as a result of the General Assembly's decision to increase the vacancy rates of the Organization, thus leaving the Organization with a staff complement of some 9,000. With further efficiency efforts, it seems possible that the number of staff actually on board could be further reduced.

94. With respect to phase two in the effort to meet mandated reductions, the efficiency reviews, overseen by the Efficiency Board, which is chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, Joseph Connor, have already identified concrete ways to promote efficiency and improve the performance of the Organization through short-term efficiencies that reduce costs without affecting programmes and activities; a re-engineering process, primarily through simplification so as to improve the quality, timeliness or other aspects of activities and services; and the restructuring or simplification of organizational structure. In all of these reviews, the Advisory Panel on Management and Finance, which I created in January 1994, functions as a "strategic centre", reviewing cost-effective ways of implementing mandates, rationalizing work programmes and technological innovations, and addressing new initiatives in enhancing management, accountability and oversight.

95. Efficiency measures implemented during the past year have led to substantial savings. Travel has been reduced 26 per cent in the first six months of 1996. Printing of documents and publications has been cut by 27 per cent during the same period. By late autumn, more than 270,000 United Nations documents in all official languages will be available electronically in at least 157 countries and the majority of the New York missions. And consolidating purchases of foreign currencies, which began in July, will mean savings of more than $1 million during the biennium. We are now tackling the more technical areas, where the problems of improvement in management and efficiency are being addressed by specialized working groups charged with the task of enacting necessary adjustments in procedures and techniques within their levels of competence. Such work is ongoing in many areas, including procurement reform; "outsourcing" options in printing, documentation and other conference services; performance evaluation and human resource planning; elimination of duplication and overlap in programme delivery; and deployment of advanced technology.

96. With regard to human resources, a second strategic area of management, special attention has been given to mitigating the potential impact of the staff reductions necessitated by the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/214 and 50/215. Special efforts were made to safeguard the gains achieved in the representation levels of women in the Professional category and above. The number of posts subject to geographical distribution rose to 35.1 per cent at the end of June 1996, 1 per cent higher than last year. The number of women in posts at the D-1 level and above reached 17.9 per cent — 0.8 per cent higher than last year. During the same period, 41.3 per cent of promotions were accorded to women.

97. Entry level and specialized recruitment continues, predicated on the recognized need for regular infusions of new staff members with fresh perspectives and expertise. Improved efficiency and the use of new technologies have reduced recruitment costs by 30 per cent, and the duration of the entire recruitment process is being shortened from eight to three months.

98. A key element in improving the management culture of the Organization has been the introduction of a system of performance management. An important performance management tool is the new Performance Appraisal System (PAS), which emphasizes work planning and prioritization, communication and performance monitoring, based on agreed goals and performance indicators. Despite delays caused by budgetary constraints, some 10,000 staff members worldwide have now received training in this new system.

99. Equally critical is the need to strengthen the leadership and managerial capacity of the Organization and to promote the attitudinal change required to support the new management culture. Some 300 staff members at senior levels have participated during the past year in a "People Management Training Programme", designed to provide managers with greater awareness of their managerial strengths and weaknesses. The programme will soon be made available to middle-level managers so that, by the end of 1997, some additional 600 staff members will have benefited. A special symposium for Under-Secretaries-General and heads of departments at Headquarters, in which I participated, was held from 25 to 27 July 1996, focusing on developing a common understanding of strategic leadership in managing the Organization and enhancing cross-departmental cooperation and collaboration.

100. Issues relating to gender and cultural diversity are being addressed in these management programmes, while progress has also been made on measures dealing with harassment, including sexual harassment. In addition, the Code of Conduct for the International Civil Service is being reviewed for presentation to the General Assembly, in order to delineate more clearly the fundamental duties and obligations of staff members and United Nations officials.

101. Information has been targeted as a third strategic area of management, specifically, to ensure the timely availability of better information with which to manage. In this regard, the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS), now being implemented at Headquarters and other offices, is proving to be a unifying force for the administration of the Organization, modernizing and enhancing the use of financial, human resources and procurement information and strengthening internal controls and accountability.

102. In the fourth strategic area of management, technology, a strategic technology plan is being developed to serve as a worldwide infrastructure for data processing, office automation and telecommunications. This plan will achieve economies of scale by applying standards in each of these three areas, and provide all areas of the Secretariat with a framework for a coordinated and consistent approach in the development of their applications, which also maintains the flexibility required for specific activities. In assuring complementarity of the applications of data processing, for example, the global Secretariat will be even more integrated and reinforced.

103. A major achievement in the management of technology has been the remote translation and text processing in all languages at Headquarters locations of all documentation generated by various global conferences. For example, no reference, translation or text-processing staff had to travel to the conference sites for the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held at Cairo, the Fourth World Conference on Women, held at Beijing, the ninth session of UNCTAD, held at Midrand, South Africa, or the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), held at Istanbul. Remote translation was also employed for the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People.

104. Another important component of the new technology strategy is the implementation of the optical disk system, which offers easy high-speed electronic access to United Nations documents. Since the technical environment was completed, the number of users has increased to over 800 at the present time. Assuming a continuing accelerated rate of connection of new users, the target figure of some 1,600 users will definitely be reached before the end of 1997. All documents issued both in New York and Geneva are stored in the system in all languages.

105. A fifth strategic objective, and a key aspect of organizational reform, has been to improve the management of the Organization's work programme through the identification of strategic priorities through the budgetary process, by which resources are allocated to achieve those priorities, and through a strengthened performance measurement system. I recently presented to the Committee for Programme and Coordination the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001. With its new format, the plan provides for clearly defined objectives and emphasizes full congruence between the programmes and the departments responsible for their implementation — it clearly recognizes accountability. As such, the new medium-term plan will provide a firm basis for strategic resource proposals in the next two programme budgets. Further steps are being taken to revitalize and expand the

measurement system, which will hold programme managers accountable for achieving the strategic priorities.

106. Finally, the improvement of management and accountability in the area of procurement was another important reform task undertaken during the past year. Following the recommendations of the high-level group of experts on procurement, the Procurement and Transportation Division was restructured into a commodity-based system, sustained by a section providing centralized support and management, in line with modern management practice. The new structure not only concentrates expertise where it belongs — on designated commodities — but reduces the layers of supervision and releases personnel for actual procurement functions. Members of the high-level group continue to work directly with the management and the staff members of the Division in order to bring about the reform expeditiously. One of their priority tasks is to prepare draft policies and procedures concerning procurement for consideration by the Secretariat. It is expected that these will be finalized during the latter part of 1996.

Office of Internal Oversight Services

107. The Office of Internal Oversight Services, under the leadership of the Under-Secretary-General, Karl Theodor Paschke, issued its first annual report during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. The debate on the report, which took place in the Fifth Committee in December 1995, confirmed that Member States were, by and large, satisfied with the progress the Office had made since its inception. The Office will issue its second annual report, covering its activities between 1 July 1995 and 30 June 1996, during the fifty-first session of the Assembly.

108. In providing the United Nations with strong and effective internal oversight, the Office not only has become a key element of management efficiency, but it has also helped to cultivate an effective management culture and a sound work environment throughout the Organization. In recognition of this, I proposed the strengthening of the Office in terms of the resources allocated to it by the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997, which, when adopted, added 12 new posts to the Office. While the mandated budget reductions have precluded the immediate utilization of all the new posts, strengthening the Investigations Section remains important.

109. Through its resolution 48/218 B, which established the Office of Internal Oversight Services, the General Assembly requested me to prepare a report on the internal oversight functions of the Organization's operational funds and programmes. At my request, the Office gathered information and prepared a draft report, which has been circulated to the executive heads of each entity for transmittal to their respective governing bodies. The report has already been thoroughly discussed by several of those governing bodies and should be finalized by the end of 1996.

110. During the course of the year I have asked the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services to undertake several missions to areas where I considered it beneficial to receive his assessment on certain issues and where his personal intervention would contribute to achieving management efficiency and effectiveness. The Under-Secretary-General has made several visits to the Centre for Human Rights at Geneva, where a major restructuring was initiated following an inspection of that entity in 1993. The Under-Secretary-General travelled to the former Yugoslavia both before and after the transition to the Implementation Force (IFOR) to assess the United Nations position and the liquidation effort of United Nations Peace Forces (UNPF). In December 1995, he travelled to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to advise me on various managerial issues, including the relocation of its headquarters to Gaza. He also visited the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to investigate reports of fraud.

111. During the period under review, the Office prepared and submitted the Secretary-General's programme performance report to the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its spring session. The report reflects the diversity of the activities which the Organization implemented over the course of the biennium 1994-1995. It provides explanations and quantitative details about the changes made in the implementation of the work programme, and details the respective roles of intergovernmental bodies and the Secretariat in shaping those changes. In another major effort, the Office submitted three reports on the status of implementation of its recommendations to various United Nations offices, thereby introducing a systematic approach, which has brought some moderate improvements in implementation. I have requested each office concerned to designate a focal point for oversight matters to establish liaison with the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the implementation of its recommendations.

Office of Legal Affairs

112. The Office of Legal Affairs, headed by Hans Corell, has continued to provide legal advice and assistance on issues arising out of the decisions and activities of the principal and subsidiary organs of the United Nations, particularly with respect to the implementation of various aspects of Security Council decisions.

113. During the period under review, the Office of Legal Affairs provided wide-ranging legal services and support to the Organization, including research and preparation of opinions on private, comparative and international law issues arising out of United Nations activities; legal advice and services on various aspects of peace-keeping operations, that is, claims arising from such operations; personnel, administrative and other administrative law matters; as well as contracting and procurement. The Office provided a similar range of advice to United Nations organizations and subsidiary organs.

114. The Office of Legal Affairs has assisted in the interpretation of the mandate of, and the drafting of and advice on status-of-forces agreements, status-of-mission agreements, privileges and immunities and rules of engagement of, United Nations peace-keeping operations. In particular, the phasing out of operations has raised complex legal issues, such as in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda, where, in both cases, the Office was involved with the phasing out of United Nations peace-keeping operations and the establishment of a new United Nations presence — although in Rwanda, as mentioned above, it has not yet proved possible to establish the new United Nations Office requested by the Government of that country. The Office of Legal Affairs was also involved in interpreting the mandate and reviewing new rules of engagement for the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti (UNSMIH), which was established by the Security Council given the final extension of the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH).

115. The Office continues to be involved in the provision of legal advice and services in current operations/missions in Angola, Georgia, Guatemala, Haiti, Iraq/Kuwait, Lebanon, Tajikistan and Western Sahara. The Office has also been engaged in the drafting and negotiation of an agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Kenya on the privileges, immunities and facilities of the United Nations peace-keeping, humanitarian and similar operations which use Kenya as a base for their activities in neighbouring countries.

116. The Office played the lead role in the first phase of the implementation of Security Council resolution 986 (1995) on the establishment of a mechanism to enable Iraq to sell petroleum and petroleum products under United Nations supervision, in order to obtain humanitarian supplies urgently needed by the Iraqi people. The Legal Counsel led a United Nations team which held four rounds of talks with an Iraqi delegation between 8 February and 15 May 1996. The Office contributed to, and coordinated, the drafting of the memorandum of understanding between the Secretariat of the United Nations and the Government of Iraq, containing practical arrangements for the implementation of the resolution. This effort culminated in the signing of the memorandum of understanding on 20 May 1996, after which the Office continued to be involved in the preparatory phase preceding the full implementation of the resolution. In particular, the Legal Counsel participated in the meetings of the Interdepartmental Steering Committee coordinating the work of the various Secretariat units involved and provided advice on relevant legal issues. The Office was also represented in the technical mission dispatched to Iraq in June 1996 to review logistical and other arrangements. The Office continues to provide legal assistance and advice to the various sanctions committees and the United Nations Compensation Commission.

117. In collaboration with the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, the Office has prepared Directives for United Nations Peace-keeping Forces regarding respect for international humanitarian law. In promulgating the Directives and disseminating them to United Nations peace-keeping forces, the United Nations will be complying with its obligation under common article 1 of the Geneva Conventions to respect and to ensure respect for the principles of international humanitarian law. At the request of the General Assembly, the Office has prepared a legal study on the procedures for settling third-party claims associated with United Nations peace-keeping operations and the principles of liability of the United Nations for the activities of such operations and their personnel.

118. The Office of Legal Affairs has provided advice on numerous ongoing activities related to the International Criminal Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda. It was requested to advise on the relationship between the International Tribunals and third States, and the Security Council, respectively. On behalf of the Office of the Prosecutor, the Office has been involved in negotiating an agreement with the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the establishment of a liaison office in Sarajevo. Also in that connection, the Office negotiated with representatives of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia an exchange of letters on the status of the Liaison Office of the Prosecutor of the International Tribunal in Belgrade. The Office has advised the Security Council on the proposed amendments to the statutes of both International Tribunals emanating from their respective judges. The Office also assisted in the drafting of the terms of reference of the International Commission of Inquiry for Burundi and has provided advice and opinions in relation to the applicable law.

119. The Office of Legal Affairs is ensuring consistency in the implementation of General Assembly decisions on the participation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and its status throughout the United Nations system. This question continues to raise sensitive legal and political issues.

120. The Office completed the drafting of a set of Guidelines for the Conduct of United Nations Inquiries into Allegations of Massacres, which had been requested by the Secretary-General in view of the absence of procedures generally applicable to such investigations when conducted by the United Nations. The Guidelines were published in November 1995 and the Office of Legal Affairs ensured their distribution throughout the United Nations system and to other organizations and institutions active in the area of human rights or criminal investigation.

121. The Office of Legal Affairs was actively involved in the conclusion of the Cooperation Agreements with the Inter-Parliamentary Union and with the International Organization for Migration. The Office also participated in the negotiation of the host country agreements for, and provided parliamentary legal assistance and advice to, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and their preparatory processes. The Office provided legal assistance to the First Review Conference of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. In addition, the Office participated in the negotiation of agreements with the Government of Germany for the headquarters of the United Nations Volunteers programme at Bonn. Negotiations also continued with the Government of Japan for a model framework agreement for United Nations conferences in that country.

122. The Office represented the Secretary-General in staff disputes before the United Nations Administrative Tribunal, and represented the Organization in judicial and arbitral proceedings. Of particular interest in this respect are the provision of advice on the reform of the internal system of justice; the elaboration of a code of conduct for United Nations staff and other United Nations personnel for presentation to the Assembly after consultations with programme managers and staff; the provision of advice to an expert group on procurement reform; the drafting of new standard aircraft lease agreements; a major lease for premises for the United Nations and UNDP in New York; and the drafting of self-insurance arrangements for new UNICEF premises in New York.

123. Another important task of the Office of Legal Affairs is to provide secretariat services to the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly, the International Law Commission and ad hoc legal bodies. The adoption by the Assembly of the United Nations Model Rules for the Conciliation of Disputes between States (resolution 50/50) is an important achievement in that these rules incorporated a number of innovations and the results of the most recent scholarly work and accumulated experience in the field of international conciliation. These rules apply to disputes between States where those States have expressly agreed to their application in full or in part. The General Assembly decided to draw to the attention of States the possibility of applying the Model Rules whenever a dispute has arisen between States which it has not been possible to solve through direct negotiations. The Secretary-General is requested, to the extent possible and in accordance with the terms of the Model Rules, to lend his assistance to States resorting to conciliation on the basis of those rules.

124. A significant development in this context was the General Assembly's decision to establish a Preparatory Committee on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court, open to all Members of the United Nations or members of specialized agencies. The mandate of this Preparatory Committee, which is serviced by the Office of Legal Affairs, is to discuss the major substantive and administrative issues arising out of the draft statute prepared two years ago by the International Law Commission and to draft texts with a view to preparing a widely acceptable consolidated text of a convention for the establishment of an international criminal court as the next step towards consideration by a conference of plenipotentiaries. The Preparatory Committee met in March, April and August 1996. At the end of the August meeting, the Preparatory Committee will report to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session.

125. During the period under review, the Office has assisted in the implementation of the 1994 Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, which was reaffirmed by the General Assembly in its resolution 50/53.

126. The Office assists the International Law Commission in furthering its work on progressive development and codification of international law. The Commission adopted at its forty-eighth session a set of 20 articles constituting the draft Code of Crimes against the Peace and Security of Mankind, which is now before the General Assembly for its action.

127. The Office serves as the secretariat of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) in furthering the progressive harmonization and unification of the laws of international trade. At its session in 1995, the Commission finalized and submitted to the General Assembly the draft United Nations Convention on Independent Guarantees and Stand-by Letters of Credit, the purpose of which is to eliminate uncertainties in the use of such instruments and prevent their abuse. The Convention was adopted and opened for signature by the General Assembly in resolution 50/48 on 11 December 1995.

128. Another major legislative text, which the Commission adopted at its 1996 session, is the draft UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Commerce, which

is designed to eliminate legal obstacles in the use of modern technologies in business communications. The Commission also adopted a non-legislative text aimed at assisting arbitration practitioners by listing and briefly describing questions on which appropriately timed decisions on organizing arbitral proceedings may be useful.

129. Other matters under consideration by the Commission and its working groups include electronic bills of lading, cross-border insolvency, receivables financing and build-operate-transfer project-implementation schemes. The Office of Legal Affairs has faced considerably increased demands, in particular from newly independent and developing countries, both for assistance in the modernization of their trade legislation and for training and technical assistance regarding legal texts emanating from the Commission's work.

130. The Office provides a range of advice and assistance on issues relating to treaty law and technical aspects of treaties. Further to the mandate provided by the General Assembly and in accordance with the expressed expectations of Member States, the Office is implementing a comprehensive computerization programme to facilitate the effective dissemination of treaty information from the United Nations Treaty Database through global electronic gateways. The publication *Multilateral Treaties Deposited with the Secretary-General* is now available in electronic format, is updated on a daily basis and is made available with full text search and retrieval capability within the United Nations network. In addition, it is available on the Internet at address: *http://www.un.org/Depts/Treaty*, where it is accessed over 700 times per week. This document continues to be published in hard copy in English and French.

131. The *United Nations Treaty Series* is a major publication, mandated by Article 102 of the Charter. So far, 1,500 volumes have been converted into electronic image format, stored on the optical disk, mechanically indexed, and are now retrievable on the United Nations network. The *United Nations Treaty Series Cumulative Index* along with the *League of Nations Treaty Series* will also be converted into this format in 1996. An electronically searchable full-text index is being built. Mechanisms to provide external on-line access to the Treaty Database with the facility to charge a user fee from certain users are being tested. A work-flow system is being developed to reduce processing time for treaties being submitted to and registered with the Secretariat, and to expedite the publication process. The system will enable the publication of the *United Nations Treaty Series* through desktop publishing, which should result in significant staff and expenditure savings.

132. The present period is one of great importance for the evolution of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and its related instruments. Of particular note are the rapid increase in the number of States parties to the Convention (from 68, at the time of its entry into force in November 1994, to more than 100 in July 1996, including a number of major industrialized States); the surmounting of the final difficulties to complete the establishment of the International Seabed Authority (Kingston, Jamaica), including the election of its 36-member Council and Secretary-General; the completion of the first elections (1 August 1996) for the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (Hamburg, Germany); the entry into force of the 1994 Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the Convention in July 1996; the adoption, on 4 August 1995, of the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks; and the advanced preparations for the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf.

133. An overall assessment by the Office of the impact the entry into force of the Convention has had on existing and proposed international instruments and programmes will be submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session.

134. The Office of Legal Affairs concluded in 1996 its servicing of the International Seabed Authority. During the past year, it also convened and serviced four meetings of States parties dealing with the establishment of the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea and the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. A budget for the Tribunal for 1996-1997 has been adopted, and the election of its judges took place during the fifth meeting, held from 24 July to 2 August in New York. The judges are expected to be sworn in on 18 October 1996. The election of the members of the Commission has been postponed until March 1997. The Office of Legal Affairs is making preparations for its servicing, establishing close cooperation with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO and the International Hydrographic Organization for this purpose, and has prepared recommendations to the Meeting of States Parties concerning procedures for submissions to the Commission by coastal States claiming the limits of their continental shelves beyond 200 nautical miles from the baseline.

Department of Public Information

135. During the period covered by the present report, the Department of Public Information, under Samir Sanbar, has worked to increase its ability to provide the public with accurate information about the United Nations and foster knowledge of the Organization's efforts, while improving efficiency and limiting costs.

136. Over the past year, the Department has sought to enhance its cooperation with other elements of the United Nations system in a number of ways. It has sought closer coordination through the Joint United Nations Information Committee. Interdepartmental and inter-organizational working groups established by DPI to promote the various United Nations conferences are now being institutionalized. The Department cooperated with UNESCO to organize a regional seminar in January 1996, at Sanaa, which aimed at promoting pluralistic and independent media in the Arab countries.

137. Within the United Nations Secretariat, a high-level interdepartmental working group on public information in peace-keeping and other field missions has been established which draws together representatives of the Department with members of the Departments of Political Affairs, Peace-keeping Operations and Humanitarian Affairs. This group has adopted guidelines that lay the foundation for a more effective and unified approach to information dissemination within the Organization's missions from their inception. A roster of information officers available for mission assignments is now maintained.

138. The Department of Public Information has helped to enhance public outreach in economic and social development areas through consultations with senior officials of programmes and agencies and their information officials. Information and communication were placed at the centre of the work programme for the first year of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa. With participation from information centres, the Department arranged for a satellite-linked, multimedia launch for the Special Initiative on 15 March 1996 which helped to generate exceptional coverage of African development efforts throughout the world's media.

139. In the past year, the United Nations has pursued, in consultation with host Governments, the integration of the functions of the United Nations information centres into the office of the United Nations resident representative/resident coordinator, thus resulting in substantial savings. More than 30 of the 63 United Nations information centres now operate under the supervision of the United Nations resident representative/resident coordinator, while continuing to receive guidance from the Department. Of these, 15 information centres have been fully integrated.

140. The Department's involvement in the cycle of special world conferences and in the fiftieth anniversary observance has helped to advance United Nations cooperation with non-governmental actors, including not only non-governmental organizations, the academic community and the media, but also civic groups, youth and municipal leaders; more representatives of these groups are turning to United Nations information sources than ever before, for their own follow-up to these conferences. The Department seeks to strengthen these partnerships by carefully monitoring the impact of its non-governmental organizations liaison work, publications, electronic media products, library network, United Nations information centres and visitors' services.

141. Among the most visible of the Department's publication successes is the establishment in just a little over a year of the Blue Books Series as an important presence in international publishing. To date, 10 volumes have been produced, covering such issues as the role of the United Nations in the advancement of women and the Organization's work in crises in Rwanda, Somalia and Iraq-Kuwait. Over 14,000 copies have been sold.

142. Costs are being reduced through the introduction of desktop publishing technologies, through greater use of internal reproduction facilities, and through organization of research and publication processes in a way that allows different units to benefit from the work of others, or to share technical facilities or personnel. The reach of publications is being extended through posting on electronic networks. Following my decision to give the Department of Public Information responsibility for the sales and marketing of United Nations publications, the Department is working to promote them and to increase the proportion of publications for sale; in the past year, 26 of the 32 book titles produced by the Department were sales items. The placement of the Sales Section within the Department will also strengthen the Section's links with academic and research institutions, book editors and information centres. Centres in Moscow, Tokyo and Athens have already concluded agreements whereby "popular" versions of the Blue Books are being published in Russian, Japanese and Greek. The Department is also seeking to prevent duplication among publications through greater coordination within the Secretariat, and beyond. One accomplishment in this regard was the recent merger of the Department's biweekly newspaper, *Development Business*, with a competing publication of the World Bank.

143. The Department relies increasingly on electronic dissemination through the United Nations Home Page on the World Wide Web, which now registers more than

30,000 accesses per day. The Home Page offers press briefings, basic information about the Organization, full texts of major documents and statistical material, and allows the Organization to reduce press runs and the distribution of printed materials in regions that have ready access to electronic networks. To improve coordination among departments and offices, the Department of Public Information chairs an interdepartmental group on Internet matters.

144. Despite its increasing use of the Internet, the Department continues to rely heavily on radio and television to disseminate information. Its radio programmes are used by an estimated 1,800 broadcasting organizations in 160 countries, the "World in Review" being the most widely known. The production and sale of more than 1,200 television news packages to broadcasting organizations around the world attest to the growing demand for United Nations video and television products.

United Nations Office at Geneva

145. Under its Director-General, Vladimir Petrovsky, the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed a wide range of issues related to human rights, humanitarian operations, disarmament and security-related matters while carrying out a reorganization process aimed at achieving better delivery, efficiency and implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/215 on the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997. An efficiency review focused on three main areas: rationalization in all documentation-related areas, better use of information technology, and enhanced overall management.

146. The Office continued to strengthen working relations with the specialized agencies of the United Nations system based in Europe. In this context, the Office also strengthened its role in facilitating interchanges between Member States, the United Nations and those agencies, which has resulted in an increase of visits to it by senior governmental officials, including the Heads of State or Government of Cyprus, France, Italy, Kazakstan, Latvia, Namibia, South Africa and Ukraine.

147. Cooperation with European regional and subregional organizations intensified. The tripartite consultative meetings with the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and Geneva-based United Nations programmes were strengthened with the participation of the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Practical collaborative efforts have been initiated, particularly in the field of information-sharing through the use of modern technology. In addition, the United Nations Office at Geneva participation in the ministerial and technical meetings of these organizations has increased.

148. The activities of the United Nations Office at Geneva in the field of post-conflict rebuilding and rehabilitation found expression through the War-Torn Societies Project, which, under the aegis of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), seeks to identify novel and integrated policy responses to the complex interactions between peace-keeping, relief, rehabilitation and development activities. The Office also participated in major economic forums, such as the World Economic Forum at Davos, Switzerland.

149. In its role as "facilitator" between the countries in transition in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, the United Nations Office at Geneva initiated a collaborative project, with the support of the Economic Commission for Europe and UNDP, for the establishment of an accessible compilation of global United Nations activities currently being carried out in those countries. In addition, in the area of disarmament, the Office organized a media seminar on the work of the Conference on Disarmament, the negotiation process of the comprehensive test-ban treaty and the Review Conference of the Convention on Conventional Weapons.

150. From September 1995 to June 1996, 6,515 meetings (including 279 outside Geneva), were serviced by the Conference Services Division (2,505 with interpretation and 4,010 without). This represents a 2 per cent increase over the previous period, when 6,376 meetings (including 563 outside Geneva) were serviced (2,529 with interpretation and 3,847 without). Strengthened cooperation between United Nations Headquarters, the United Nations Office at Geneva and the United Nations Office at Vienna resulted in a better utilization of available resources among those three major conference centres. The Office has also been exploring ways of improving its delivery of services through enhanced use of new technologies. The Conference Services Division, for example, is now connected to the Internet, allowing for file transfer to other duty stations and conference centres and for access to databases, such as terminology glossaries. The Division has made its data available on the Office's Home Page on the Internet.

151. Apart from servicing its established bodies, the Office hosted a number of important meetings related to political or peace-keeping subjects, such as the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, the United Nations Compensation Commission, the Review Conferences on the Biological and the Conventional Weapons Treaties and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In addition, the Plan of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 continued to give rise to new working groups meeting at Geneva.

152. In collaboration with the Dag Hammarskjöld Library at Headquarters, the Library in Geneva continually feeds the United Nations Bibliographic Information System (UNBIS) and maintains its own integrated management system (URICA). It also provides access to a number of external databases and over the past few years has acquired a collection of CD-ROMs. The Library recently installed a server to make approximately 40 of these CD-ROMs available via the network (FDDI) at the Palais des Nations. In-house production of CD-ROMs is also being undertaken.

153. To commemorate the dissolution of the League of Nations and the transfer of the assets of the League to the United Nations on 18 April 1946, the Library developed electronic media products, including a compact disc audio booklet. A number of exhibitions were also organized in collaboration with the Institute of Architecture of the University of Geneva.

United Nations Office at Vienna

154. The United Nations Office at Vienna, headed by the Director-General, Giorgio Giacomelli, is the headquarters for United Nations activities in the fields of international drug abuse control, crime prevention and criminal justice, the peaceful uses of outer space and international trade law. It is also an important meeting-place and support centre for peace-keeping operations.

155. In response to the increasingly evident threat posed by crime to national sovereignty, stability, democracy and development, and as noted by the General Assembly in resolutions 50/146 and 50/214, the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch of the United Nations Office at Vienna was upgraded to the level of a Division, so that it could better promote strategies to combat criminality and improve international cooperation in this field.

156. During the reporting period, the crime prevention and criminal justice programme confronted increased legislative demands, evident, for example, in the more than doubling in recent years of its work programme mandated by United Nations legislative bodies, including the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, and in the needs addressed by the programme.

157. The Division coordinated a Ministerial Workshop on Transnational Organized Crime at Buenos Aires in November 1995 for the Latin American and Caribbean region, designed to determine possible technical cooperation projects to help implement the outcome of the 1994 World Ministerial Conference on Organized Transnational Crime, held at Naples. The workshops resulted in two projects, one to adapt administrative and legal management instruments for the prevention and control of organized transnational crime, and another to promote good governance by combating corruption. The Ministers also agreed on some basic elements for inclusion in a new international convention against organized transnational crime.

158. In the past year, the Division initiated the United Nations International Study on Firearm Legislation in response to resolution 9 of the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (Cairo, 29 April-8 May 1995) on firearms regulation for purposes of crime prevention and public safety and Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/27, section IV.A. It is anticipated that in 1997 the study will provide the sixth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, the body responsible for policy guidance in this field, with information from which recommendations and guidelines might be made to reduce the level of violence associated with small arms, which kill hundreds of thousands of people yearly.

159. During the fifth session of the Commission, advances were made in several areas. As a follow-up to the statements by Heads of State and Government during the special commemorative meeting of the General Assembly, the Commission recommended to the Assembly the adoption of a United Nations declaration on crime and public security. It also recommended the adoption of a resolution on action against corruption containing the text of a code of conduct for public officials, as well as resolutions on, *inter alia*, the elimination of violence against women, the application of safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty, the implementation of the Naples Political Declaration and Global Action Plan against Organized Transnational Crime, the role of criminal law in the protection of the environment, and measures to prevent illicit trafficking in children.

160. The issue of the rights of victims of crime and abuse of power in the international setting has been evolving since the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in 1985. An expert group meeting on this issue, held in December 1995, developed a strategy for the drafting of a manual on the implementation of the basic principles of justice for victims of crime and abuse of power, and adopted the Principles Guaranteeing the Rights and Interests of Victims in the Proceedings of the Proposed International Criminal Court. The meeting also elaborated a series of relevant technical cooperation projects.

161. The Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division expanded its advisory services during the reporting period to include training courses, seminars and workshops on

topics as diverse as civil police training, improving prosecutorial services, advancing human rights in criminal justice, juvenile justice, treatment of offenders, correctional system reform, and criminal justice management. The Division also initiated its first fellowship programme involving seven participants from developing countries.

162. Other activities of the Division included the distribution of the fifth wave of the United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems; the publication of various issues of the *International Review of Criminal Policy*, the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Newsletter, and the Trends Letter; and the expansion of various electronic materials available via the United Nations Crime and Justice Information Network. Recent additions to the Network include all documents of the fifth session of the Commission in English, French and Spanish, and a database on extradition, judicial/legal assistance and transfer of foreign prisoners.

163. During the reporting period, the Office for Outer Space Affairs faced a growing demand from Member States for access to space technologies that can be applied in national programmes for economic and social development and for environmental protection. The Office also received an increasing number of requests to provide support in various fields, including the organization of workshops for decision makers and training courses for specialists, as well as the provision of technical advisory services, particularly in the use of communication satellites and Earth observation data.

164. Through the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, the Office organized workshops, training courses and symposia on various aspects of space science and technology and their applications for economic and social development. The Office also provided technical advisory services to develop indigenous space capability in developing countries, including assistance in developing and implementing pilot projects on space applications. The Office continued to service the General Assembly's Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and its Legal Subcommittee, as well as their subsidiary bodies. The Committee, at its thirty-ninth session, made significant progress by finalizing the text of a declaration of principles on the sharing of the benefits of space technology.

165. Significant progress was made in establishing regional centres for space science and technology education in developing countries, in each region covered by the regional commissions. These centres will provide education and training in space-related disciplines and applications. In November 1995, the Centre for Asia and the Pacific was inaugurated in India, and the first nine-month course with 26 students started in April 1996. The Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean, which will be hosted by Brazil and Mexico, is expected to become operational in 1996. As for the region of Africa, Morocco and Nigeria have been identified as the host countries for centres for the French-speaking and for the English-speaking African countries, respectively.

166. Recommendations from past workshops of the Programme on Space Applications have led to concrete advances in regional cooperation. The First United Nations Workshop on Basic Space Science, held in India in 1991, led to the establishment of a national astronomical observatory in Sri Lanka, inaugurated in January 1996, which will house a reflecting research telescope obtained by the Office through the Cultural Grant Aid of Japan. Other workshops on basic space science have led to the refurbishing of Africa's largest telescope at the Kottamia Observatory in Egypt and to the establishment of an astronomical observatory in Honduras.

167. As part of the Space Information Service, the Office further developed, in 1995, its computer database and its Home Page on the Internet, which contains updated information on the work of the Office and space-related activities of the United Nations, as well as information submitted by Member States on their national space activities. Following an agreement reached at the seventeenth session of the Inter-agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, held in February 1996, the Office has initiated action to act as the central coordinator in expanding the use of the Internet as a means of strengthening inter-agency coordination and ensuring the availability on the Internet of information on the work of United Nations agencies.

168. As part of its parliamentary services, the Office continued to develop plans to support the preparatory work in intergovernmental committees for the convening of a special session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE-III), open to all States Members of the United Nations, to be held in 1999 unless agreement is reached to hold it in 2000.

169. Finally, during the period under review, the Division of Administrative and Common Services of the United Nations Office at Vienna provided administrative and common support services to United Nations units and programmes located at Vienna and to the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) at Rome. The Division also provided support for peace-keeping operations, carried out unified conference service for United Nations/United Nations Industrial Development Organization meetings and other meetings of the United Nations system, and managed some of the common services for the Vienna International Centre. From

1 August 1995 to 1 July 1996, a total of 2,400 meetings were planned and serviced at Vienna, representing an increase of approximately 9 per cent over the previous year. Pursuant to the introduction of remote translation in 1995, measures were taken to standardize the practice, which has achieved substantial savings.

United Nations Office at Nairobi

170. On 1 January 1996, the United Nations Office at Nairobi was created by integrating all support functions which heretofore had been provided separately by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and common services, and by combining resources which had been devoted to administrative matters. The function of the Office is to provide a range of administrative services to UNEP and Habitat, including human resources management, finance, conference services, electronic services and support services such as contract, procurement, travel, building management, security, registry and mail.

171. The creation of the United Nations Office at Nairobi eliminated duplication of services and at the same time provided an opportunity to achieve significant economies of scale. The Office reports to the Executive Director of UNEP in her capacity as the most senior official at Nairobi.

Administrative Committee on Coordination

172. Following the launching of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa on 15 March 1996, which is described in greater detail below in the context of operational activities for development, the Administrative Committee on Coordination focused its attention on arrangements which would ensure the Special Initiative's effective and expeditious implementation. All executive heads of United Nations agencies and organizations reaffirmed their full support for the Initiative, as an integral part of a renewed commitment by the United Nations system to furthering the effective implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and of the system's contribution to meeting the development priorities of African Governments, as set out in the 1995 Cairo Plan of Action and other regional plans.

173. The Committee noted with appreciation that many of the governing bodies of the organizations had already been seized with the Special Initiative. It reviewed the steps being taken to pursue the Initiative within organizations, as well as at the country and regional levels. The Committee expressed satisfaction at the progress being made by the designated lead agencies, in close consultation with African Governments and in cooperation with other organizations concerned, in the formulation of implementation strategies for the different components of the Initiative. The importance of promoting an economic environment conducive to the mobilization of domestic, as well as foreign investments, and of capacity-building for policy formulation and stimulating productive activities, was emphasized. A number of key cross-sectoral themes, to be addressed in all components of the Initiative, such as the mainstreaming of gender issues, were also highlighted.

174. Members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination recognized that the impact of the Special Initiative would largely depend on the effectiveness of joint action at the country level, and undertook to provide full support to the resident coordinators in the region in the exercise of the key role they will be called to play in this regard. The Administrative Committee on Coordination is actively pursuing ways of further strengthening partnerships between organizations of the United Nations system, civil society and the donor community. The Committee strongly emphasized the need to give particular attention, in the implementation of the Initiative, to the special situations facing countries affected by conflicts and other emergencies, and to overcoming, in such circumstances, the gap between assistance and measures to meet long-term development need. It also recognized that both reallocation of existing budgets and new resources would be required to fund programmes under the Initiative: joint programming under the Initiative should lead to a better use of existing resources; this should, in turn, help to attract additional financing. Finally, the Committee recognized the need for careful monitoring and evaluation of progress, at the national, regional and global levels, and for the development of effective performance indicators. It decided to keep under review progress in the implementation of the Initiative at each of its forthcoming sessions.

175. In the same broad context, the Administrative Committee on Coordination welcomed the joint World Bank-International Monetary Fund initiative for a proposed "Framework for Action" to resolve the debt problems of the heavily indebted countries, and designed to address the totality of the debt of affected countries, on a case-by-case basis. The Committee underscored that the resolution of the debt problems of African countries would be a key step to advance their development prospects.

176. At the last session of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, special attention was given to arrangements to provide coordinated support for national-level follow-up. Three task forces are currently pursuing this work, around priority themes that cut across the plans

of action adopted by the conferences. All three task forces were conceived as time-bound mechanisms. One task force is addressing the enabling environment for social and economic development, with the World Bank serving as lead agency. A second is concerned with employment and sustainable livelihood, with the International Labour Organization as lead agency. And a third is pursuing basic social services, with the United Nations Population Fund as lead organization. The latter group is an extension of the inter-agency task force originally established to coordinate the immediate follow-up by the system to the International Conference on Population and Development.

177. Furthering progress in poverty eradication, in accordance with the targets and commitments adopted at those conferences, particularly the World Summit for Social Development, is a common, basic objective underlying the work of all these mechanisms. Key policy objectives, such as promotion of human rights and the advancement of women, which have been the focus of two recent global conferences, are being pursued by each task force in the context of the theme assigned to it. The outcome of Habitat II will similarly be integrated into the work of these task forces.

178. The Committee also decided to establish an Inter-agency Committee on Women, charged with addressing, on a comprehensive, system-wide basis, all aspects of the Platform of Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, as well as gender-related recommendations emanating from other recent international conferences which come within the purview of the system.

179. Universal access to basic communication and information services was identified by ACC as another important cross-sectoral issue, and is the subject of a new inter-agency project, with the International Telecommunication Union serving as lead agency.

180. The Administrative Committee on Coordination also pursued, at its last session, its review of the experience with the streamlining and reorganization of its machinery introduced in 1993. There was general recognition among the Committee members that reorganization had served to enhance significantly its functioning and the effectiveness of its subsidiary bodies. Further improvements are being pursued, aimed at sustaining, at all levels, a consistent pattern of concrete and tangible results, in terms of more effective policy and programme coordination and the development of joint initiatives in key areas of system-wide concern. Some current initiatives of this nature are described below, in the context of operational activities for development.

181. The Committee is taking further steps to strengthen its capacity to promote common assessments by executive heads of the environment in which international cooperation and development are taking place; of developments in intergovernmental bodies and the collective responses required of organizations; and of the expectations of Governments of Member States and the public with respect to the efficient and effective delivery of services, particularly at the country level, including a strengthening of linkages between multilateral and bilateral assistance, and between emergency, post-emergency and development assistance. Measures are likewise being introduced to enhance the capacity of the Committee to monitor and guide systematic follow-up throughout the system to the conclusions and decisions reached by it.

182. With respect to the subsidiary bodies of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, steps are being taken to make their work more policy- and task-oriented, and to enhance overall cost-effectiveness. More extensive use of electronic networks, better use of the facilities of jointly financed secretariats, more frequent resort to "lead agency" or "task managers" arrangements, and the flexible use of working groups or task forces of concerned agencies for specific purposes, are among the means being pursued to reduce the number of inter-agency meetings and enhance economies and overall efficiency.

183. The Committee also continued, during the period under review, to review and promote reform processes throughout the system, including a strengthening of inter-agency arrangements at the country level; to monitor the financial situation system-wide; and to introduce improvements in the management of the common system.

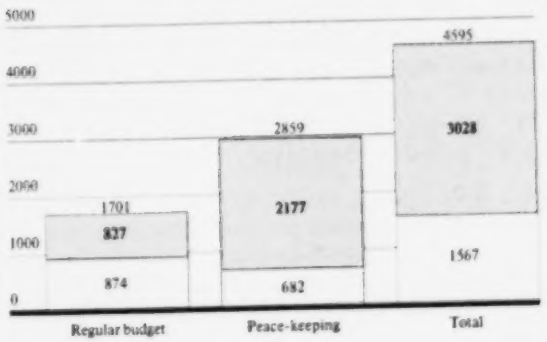
B. Ensuring an adequate financial base

184. As at 31 July 1996, unpaid assessments exceeded $3 billion. Of this amount, $0.8 billion is for the regular budget and $2.2 billion is for peace-keeping budgets (see fig. 7). Only 83 countries have paid their 1996 regular budget obligations in full.

185. The amount the Organization had to borrow from peace-keeping accounts at the end of 1995 to meet the pressing need for regular budget cash was unprecedentedly high: $176 million. Also unprecedented was the fact that funds borrowed against peace-keeping accounts were not repaid before the end of the year, with the result that the Organization began 1996 in a negative cash position for the regular budget.

186. As 1996 unfolded, delays and uncertainties in Member States' payments of their assessed contributions brought the Organization to a negative cash position two additional times — once at the end of May and again at the end of July. This has again compelled the Organization to

Figure 7
Status of contributions
(peace-keeping and regular budget)[a, b]
Millions of United States dollars



[a] As at 31 July 1996. Includes amounts unpaid from previous years' assessments.

[b] Does not include assessments ($34.8 million), payments received ($11.0 million) and contributions outstanding ($23.8 million) for the International Tribunals for Rwanda and the Former Yugoslavia.

resort to borrowing temporarily from peace-keeping accounts, with the result that by the end of 1996, the United Nations will owe Member States $675 million for troops and equipment. The full payment by 80 Member States of their regular budget dues by 24 July 1996 — compared to 57 Member States at the same date last year — and the General Assembly's decision for the time being not to apply available credits from past mandates to peace-keeping assessments have both improved the Organization's overall cash-flow position. In this regard, I am grateful for the efforts made by many Member States. However, we continue to face a worsening regular budget situation, with a persistent, negative cash flow already seen and forecast for many months of the year. Without substantial additional major contributions before the end of the year, the total cash balance of the United Nations regular and peace-keeping budgets will be dangerously low.

187. In February 1996, I addressed the General Assembly's High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations and stressed the urgency of the financial crisis. I observed that the way ahead requires that we take immediate action while we think about and discuss the long-term solution. To address the immediate, short-term cash-flow crisis, Member States must honour their obligations and pay their current contributions as well as all arrears from previous years. Over the longer term, a new scale of assessments must be developed which enjoys the confidence of all Member States. I stressed to the Working Group that the scale of assessments should reflect the global nature of the United Nations. In this connection, I proposed that a ceiling of 20 or 15 per cent of the total assessed contributions to the regular budget of the United Nations for any one Member State would provide for a more even distribution of the assessed contributions and would better reflect the fact that this Organization is the instrument of all nations.

188. During my statement in March 1996 to the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System, I spoke of another major requirement for solving the financial crisis over the long term: a change in the budgetary review process, which, as it stands today, is too complex and too rigid. The budgetary review process needs to be simplified and refocused so that it can serve as a flexible and effective instrument for policy direction and management, for both the Secretary-General and Member States. The programme budget would allocate requisite resources towards agreed strategic priorities, while allowing the flexibility to adapt to changing requirements.

189. The High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations concluded its deliberations on 4 June 1996 by approving a report, which will be before the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. The Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System finalized its report on the progress of the Working Group on 25 July 1996; the report will be before the Assembly at its fiftieth session.

C. The fiftieth anniversary

190. The Fiftieth Anniversary Secretariat, headed by Gillian Martin Sorensen, developed and implemented an ambitious global programme of commemorative activities and products. An array of materials, including press kits, newsletters, public service announcements for television and radio, an information booklet, photo packages depicting the "UN in Action", a brochure on the Charter and posters, were disseminated worldwide. A photograph exhibit was mounted, and a number of interactive multimedia kiosks were created. Outreach efforts targeted participating schools, media outlets, United Nations Associations, the network of United Nations information centres, and the National Committees created by more than 150 Governments specifically for the purpose of participating in the fiftieth anniversary observance. Most of the above products and materials are not "dated" and thus will be useful for a number of years to come.

191. The various activities undertaken in the context of the anniversary embraced a larger and more diverse range

of people than any single previous effort in the history of the United Nations. In addition to the special commemorative meeting, the activities included conferences, debates, documentaries, concerts, exhibitions, essay contests, sporting events, religious services and interfaith gatherings. Participants included presidents, prime ministers, royalty, diplomats, press, clergy of all the world's religions, academics, representatives of non-governmental organizations, students, military officers and local and national officials. Young people were a special focus at all times, and an impressive number of "model" United Nations were organized at both the high school and university levels.

192. The special commemorative meeting of the General Assembly, held at Headquarters from 22 to 24 October 1995, was one such historic event. The massive and detailed planning, and the wide network of support provided by United Nations staff, the City of New York and the security agencies, made it possible for world leaders to come and go in safety and dignity, to enjoy the occasion, to express their views and, by their words and their presence, to reaffirm the membership's commitment to the United Nations at the highest political level.

193. One of the most important outcomes of the anniversary year was the impetus it provided for serious study of the United Nations. Universities, think tanks, Governments, parliaments, former diplomats, journalists and historians all contributed their experience and intellect, thereby deepening the already intense and constructive global dialogue about the Organization's future and launching a new generation of scholarship on the United Nations and its work. Much of this scholarship is being used as reference by the various working groups of the General Assembly. The bibliography of the compendium of the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System, now being drafted, refers to nearly 300 studies and reports put forward in the course of the anniversary year.

194. Postal administrations in almost all Member States issued stamps commemorating the fiftieth anniversary, and more than 50 Member States issued commemorative coins. Revenue from these items will continue to flow to the United Nations for some years.

195. Fiftieth anniversary National Committees varied in levels of activity and initiative; 152 Governments named official committees while others worked through existing United Nations Associations. Country reports continue to be submitted, with many indicating that their anniversary initiatives will have a long and continuing life, particularly in schools. On college campuses, for example, there are more discussions and more courses offered on the United Nations and international organizations than ever before.

196. The year-long commemoration has ended, and the Secretariat of the United Nations Fiftieth Anniversary has been disbanded, but the lessons and impact continue to be integrated into the Organization's work on a daily basis. The fiftieth anniversary observance served as a catalyst for an innovative, forward-looking exchange of views about the United Nations at a crucial moment in world history. It recognized the Organization's achievements during its first half century, while setting a course for its next 50 years. Most importantly, it helped to enlarge the constituency that understands and supports the United Nations as the world Organization, in the service of its Member States and their peoples.

D. United Nations University (UNU)

197. The Governing Council of the United Nations University held its forty-second session from 4 to 8 December 1995 at its Headquarters in Tokyo. Its deliberations, led by Rector Heitor Gurgulino de Souza, focused on priorities for the University's work through the turn of the century.

198. During 1995 the Council established in Tokyo, next to the University Headquarters, the University's fifth research and training centre, the UNU Institute of Advanced Studies, to address selected global issues on the United Nations agenda. The various other UNU research and training centres and programmes continue to expand their activities to meet the growing demand for advanced interdisciplinary research and training. Another highlight of the year was the formal launching of the UNU International Leadership Academy, located at Amman.

199. From 1 September 1995 to 30 June 1996, approximately 100 UNU academic meetings were held worldwide. As at 30 June 1996, a total of 73 fellowships were awarded for training at UNU research and training centres and at associated and other cooperating institutions. The main areas of training include geothermal energy, remote sensing technology, food science and technology, seismic and cyclone hazard mitigation, biotechnology, and food and nutrition. In 1995, 73 per cent of the UNU fellows were trained at institutions in developing countries, and 27 per cent in industrialized countries. More than 1,420 UNU fellows have completed their training since 1976.

200. The University is assessing its training and fellowship activities in order to develop a strategy to ensure their coherent implementation, including an appropriate geographic balance in their distribution. The University is also working to strengthen the outreach of the UNU Press and to enhance the effectiveness of UNU dissemination

activities. In the latter connection, the UNU Public Forum series was initiated in New York and Tokyo during the reporting period. The series is intended to disseminate the results of research undertaken by the University, stimulate discussion on policy alternatives, and provide for the exchange of views between practitioners and scholars so as to identify for the University possible areas of future research. To date, more than 400 books, 6 scientific journals and numerous research papers and studies have been produced from UNU research.

201. At the Fourth World Conference on Women, UNU formally launched "Women Encounter Technology: Changing Patterns of Employment in the Third World" a UNU volume. Prior to the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), UNU organized in the summer of 1995 a Conference on World Cities and the Urban Future, which was immediately followed by a UNU/World Institute for Development Economics Research Conference on Human Settlements in Changing Global Economic and Political Processes, held at Helsinki. At the Conference itself, UNU convened a Panel on Globalization and the Urban Future, launched the widely disseminated "Habitat II and the Urban Economy", of the UNU/WIDER "Research for Action" series, and organized a UNU book exhibit.

202. As at 31 July 1996, pledges to the Endowment Fund and operating and specific programme contributions totalled $318.27 million, of which $289.8 million had been received. For the first half of 1996, a total of $16.4 million had been pledged and/or contributed to the Endowment Fund and operating expenses; specific programme contributions totalling $1,235,637 were received. Nevertheless, the University faced continued financial constraints brought on by lower investment income from its Endowment Fund and increased competition for limited resources. Special efforts were made throughout the year to enhance fund-raising.

III

Building the foundations of peace: development, humanitarian action, human rights

A. Implementing an Agenda for Development

203. The Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on an Agenda for Development concluded its work for the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly on 8 September 1995, and reported to the Assembly on the progress achieved. On the basis of that report, the Assembly decided that the Working Group should continue its work during its fiftieth session, with a view to finalizing the Agenda for Development, and report to the Assembly at its fiftieth session.

204. The Working Group met from 20 January to 2 February 1996. A second session was held from 20 to 31 May, a third on 12 June and a fourth from 17 to 21 June 1996. A fifth session is scheduled from 3 to 6 September 1996. By the end of July, there was almost complete agreement on the first two chapters of the Agenda, "Setting and objectives" and "Policy framework including means of implementation", but the third chapter, "Institutional issues and follow-up", is still largely in the initial negotiation phase.

205. The main objectives of the Agenda for Development include strengthening international cooperation for development, enhancing the role, capacity, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations system in development, and promoting an integrated approach to development. The context in which these objectives are to be pursued is spelled out in the Agenda's first chapter.

206. The second chapter addresses the policies and measures that should be pursued, and the means of implementing them. It deals with the crucial issue of the mobilization and more efficient use of resources for development, both domestically and from external sources.

207. The third and final chapter of the Agenda for Development addresses the objective of enhancing the role, capacity, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations system. Reform proposals are made for, *inter alia*, the General Assembly, in particular its Second and Third Committees, the Economic and Social Council, including the functional commissions, expert groups, regional commissions, funds and programmes and specialized agencies, and the Secretariat. The third chapter also deals with the interaction between the United Nations and other multilateral development institutions, including the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization. The proposals are closely linked to General Assembly resolution 50/227, which concerns the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, and to the work of the Open-ended High-level Working Group of the General Assembly on the Strengthening of the United Nations System.

208. Overall, the Agenda for Development has the potential to provide an important blueprint for international development cooperation in the years to come. It contains numerous new elements that allow a broader view of development than has been adopted in the past, while recognizing previous accomplishments in development cooperation, notably the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly, the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, and the results of the recent conference cycle. Linking policies and measures with institutional capacities is an important feature of the Agenda for Development, and is a strong indication that the international community is committed to maintaining the central position of the United Nations in international cooperation for development.

B. Global development activities

1. Secretariat departments at Headquarters

Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development

209. The Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, headed by Nitin Desai, provides

support for the central coordinating and policy-making functions vested in the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies, and for the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly. Ensuring the integration of economic, social and environmental concerns in policy development and implementation is a crucial objective underlying the structure and mandate of the Department.

210. The report on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/50/202-E/1995/76) served as the basis for preliminary review by the Economic and Social Council and a comprehensive policy review by the General Assembly leading to the adoption of resolution 50/120, which provides a policy framework for operational activities for the next three years.

211. In that resolution the General Assembly addressed the issues of resources, enhanced coordination, efficiency and effectiveness of operational activities for development and established mechanisms for implementing and monitoring the provisions of the resolution. The Assembly also identified measures to strengthen the country strategy note process, the resident coordinator system, capacity-building and national execution; measures for the achievement of common premises and joint administrative services and greater harmonization of rules and procedures; and other measures to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of operational activities.

212. During 1995, I wrote to heads of State or Government stressing the political significance of the World Summit for Social Development held at Copenhagen in March of that year and the commitments made there, and proposed the designation of national focal points on the implementation of those commitments. In commitment 2 of the Copenhagen Declaration, each State present pledged itself to formulate, as a matter of urgency, policies geared to substantially reducing overall poverty and eradicating absolute poverty by a target date to be specified in its national context. Responses received thus far are encouraging.

213. At its fiftieth session, the General Assembly considered the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and in resolution 50/161, stressed the need for a renewed and massive political will at the national and international levels to invest in people and their well-being to achieve the objectives of social development. The Assembly decided that the Commission for Social Development would have the primary responsibility for the follow-up and review of the implementation of the Summit, while the Economic and Social Council would provide overall guidance and oversee system-wide coordination in the implementation of the outcome of the Summit. The Assembly itself will hold a special session in the year 2000 for an overall review and appraisal of implementation.

214. The General Assembly had decided earlier, in its resolution 48/183, to declare 1996 the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. In my statement on the occasion of the launching of the Year, on 18 December 1995, I indicated my intention to urge every country to set in place, in the course of 1996, a process for formulating a strategy for the eradication of absolute poverty as envisaged in the Copenhagen Declaration. To make a real impact we have to allocate more resources, national and international, for poverty alleviation.

215. The focus of the activities undertaken during the Year has been on raising awareness that poverty can and must be eradicated throughout the world, and on putting in place the structures to support a long-term, sustained effort for the full and effective implementation of the commitments and recommendations agreed upon at major United Nations conferences. I will report to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session on the specific actions taken by the United Nations system to implement the programme for the observance of the Year and will submit proposals for activities in support of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006), which was proclaimed by the Assembly in its resolution 50/107.

216. In the initial stage of follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, the General Assembly considered the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Division for the Advancement of Women contributed by preparing a series of reports and supporting the negotiation process which led to the adoption by the Assembly of two resolutions on the Conference and its follow-up. Although the financial crisis of the Organization meant that the filling of new posts authorized by the General Assembly had to be delayed and that recruitment to fill existing middle management posts was suspended, the Division nevertheless provided secretariat services for the fifteenth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in January and the fortieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March.

217. The Secretariat has begun to prepare for the 1997 session of the Commission on the Status of Women with policy analysis and the organization of pre-session specialized expert groups and seminars that will feed into the dialogues of the Commission. The first of two expert group meetings, held at Manila in May 1996, focused on violence against women migrant workers and produced recommendations for consideration by the General Assembly. The second meeting, on global information

through computer networking technology (New York, June 1996), generated recommendations on the development of Women Watch, a core Internet space aimed at facilitating global information exchange for the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Additional expert group meetings are scheduled on issues such as the participation of women in conflict resolution, women and the implementation of Agenda 21, women and training and lifelong education, and women in economic decision-making in transnational corporations and international financial institutions.

218. By its resolution 50/81, the General Assembly adopted the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, which defined targets and implementation measures within a global framework on youth policy, as well as guidelines for practical action at the national, regional and international levels.

219. By its resolution 50/141, the General Assembly endorsed the conceptual framework for the international year of older persons to be observed in 1999. Preparations for the Year are now under way. A number of Member States have initiated national debates, and international non-governmental organizations are establishing collaborative networks. The first Joint Conference on Healthy Ageing was held from 29 April to 1 May 1996 at United Nations Headquarters, organized by the Secretariat and the World Health Organization (WHO) and supported by a number of prominent corporations. The event attracted leading authorities in the field.

220. Strong non-governmental organizations interest and involvement was a special feature of activities to follow up the International Year of the Family (1994). The International Day of Families was observed by a special event at Headquarters on 15 May 1996, on the theme "Families: victims of poverty and homelessness". Parallel events were held around the world.

221. The Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries contributed to the preparation of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa by providing inputs and participating in the meetings of the Steering Committee of the Administrative Committee on Coordination on the Initiative and the related working groups. The Office has also been at the forefront of preparations for the mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, which is to take place in September 1996. It provided substantive and secretarial support for the organizational session of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole, which was held at United Nations Headquarters on 20 June 1996.

222. Since the adoption of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, relations and cooperation between the Office of the Special Coordinator and non-governmental organizations have evolved through constant consultation on priority issues of African development, and through the preparatory mechanisms for important intergovernmental processes. These included a parallel event to the 1995 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council devoted to the implementation of the New Agenda, on the theme "Priority Africa: a policy dialogue among development actors", and the non-governmental organization conference to be held in September 1996, prior to the mid-term review. Furthermore the Office coordinated the background report on the emerging role of non-governmental organizations in African sustainable development for the mid-term review.

223. As part of its effort to raise emergency issues affecting development in Africa, the Office of the Special Coordinator co-organized with the Government of Japan and the United Nations University a high-level symposium on "Peace and development: problems of conflict in Africa" in Tokyo in October 1995, with the participation of 21 prominent panellists actively involved in the prevention, management and resolution of current conflicts. The symposium also addressed the issue of post-conflict reconstruction. As a follow-up to the international workshop on informal sector development in Africa held in June 1995, the Office launched an international task force to design a special programme of support to Africa's informal sector.

224. The Office provided assistance to and participated in the meeting of an African expert group to facilitate cooperation between African and South-East Asian and other Asian countries. The meeting made concrete recommendations for Asia-Africa cooperation and will be an important input to the Second Asia-Africa Forum to be held early in 1997.

225. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, was open for signature from 14 October 1994 to 13 October 1995, and signed by 114 States and the European Union. As at 1 August 1996, 37 States had ratified or acceded to the Convention, which will enter into force three months after receiving 50 ratifications. This is expected to occur later in 1996, and the first Conference of the Parties is likely to be held in 1997.

226. In its resolution 48/234, the General Assembly authorized the International Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification to continue meeting in the interim period before the entry into force of the Convention to prepare for the first session of the Conference of the Parties and to monitor the implementation of its resolutions on urgent

action for Africa and interim action in other regions. The Committee held its eighth session at Geneva in February 1996, and its ninth session will be held in New York in September 1996. The Assembly also extended the mandate of the interim secretariat established by resolution 47/188, which, in addition to providing documentation for the Negotiating Committee, continues an active programme of promoting action during the interim period through publications and other public relations materials, as well as a series of national awareness days, subregional seminars and other events. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 49/115, World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought was celebrated on 17 June.

227. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is nearing universal membership, with 157 States and one regional economic integration organization having become parties to it and more expected to do likewise. This compares to a total of 118 parties at the time of the first session of the Conference of the Parties (March-April 1995). As at 31 July 1996, the Convention had a total of 160 ratifications.

228. The commitments of developed country parties to limiting emissions of greenhouse gases continue to be monitored, on the basis of their national communications, while negotiations are under way to strengthen those commitments in the period beyond 2000. These negotiations, to be concluded in 1997, have been boosted by new scientific findings by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, confirming that the world's climate is changing and that human activity is influencing it. Developing country parties are receiving financial assistance from the Global Environment Facility to address climate change while pursuing sustainable development. As at 31 July 1996, 29 national communications had been received by the Convention secretariat, from the 36 parties included in annex I, and four communications from other parties. Twenty-one in-depth reviews of national communications have been undertaken.

229. In addition, the Convention secretariat is mandated by the parties to the Convention to prepare a compilation and synthesis of the national communications for consideration by them. A second such compilation and synthesis was submitted to the Conference of the Parties at its second session (see below) and it considered the national communications of 33 parties. The document provides an overview of the implementation of the Convention by reporting parties, noting trends and patterns, areas of convergence and divergence, data gaps and other appropriate conclusions, including the overall effects of policies and measures. It concludes that annex I parties need to make additional efforts to overcome difficulties that they face in achieving the aim of returning their emissions of greenhouse gases to 1990 levels by the year 2000.

230. As at 1 January 1996, the permanent secretariat of the Convention had been established, administrative arrangements made for it and its Executive Secretary appointed. A number of sessions have been held by the subsidiary bodies of the Conference of the Parties with a view to advancing the Convention process. These include the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice, the Subsidiary Body for Implementation, the Ad Hoc Group on the Berlin Mandate and the Ad Hoc Group on Article 13. In addition, the Conference of the Parties, at its second session (July 1996), adopted a number of decisions instrumental to the Convention process, including the revision of guidelines for the submission and review of national communications from annex I parties and the adoption of guidelines for the preparation of initial communications by parties not included in annex I (developing countries). The Conference also took note of a declaration by the Ministers and other heads of delegation present at its second session, described by the President as the main political statement emerging from the Conference.

231. The secretariat has also launched a consultative forum for the exchange of experience on climate change project development, implementation and follow-up; it has published the third report of the Climate Convention Information Exchange Programme which is aimed at facilitating the provision of assistance to parties; and it has initiated, together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the implementation of a training programme on the Convention process.

Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis

232. The Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis, headed by Jean-Claude Milleron, is the principal arm of the Secretariat for the elaboration of economic and social data and the analysis of development policies and trends. The Department also carries out technical cooperation projects in the areas of statistics and population.

233. The Department continued its wide-ranging programme of statistical publications during the year. In addition to the *Statistical Yearbook* and the *Demographic Yearbook*, major publications released included the *Energy Statistics Yearbook*, the *International Trade Statistics Yearbook* and the *Industrial Commodity Statistical Yearbook*. The Department also issued statistical tables on commodity production, index numbers of industrial production and new building construction, exports and imports by country, region and commodity groups, as well as index numbers of international merchandise trade,

including terms of trade of major regions, which were submitted for the monthly and quarterly issues of the *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics*.

234. The Department also produced a glossary of environment statistics and prepared contributions for the second special session of the International Association for Research into Income and Wealth Conference on Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting in Theory and Practice, held in Tokyo in March 1996. It published the second issue of *envstats*, a newsletter for environment statistics specialists. Other publications included a review of national reporting practices in international merchandise trade statistics, a manual for developing statistical information for disability programmes and a handbook on statistical methods for measurement and assessment of human activities through an improved study of impairments, disabilities and handicaps.

235. As part of its contribution to the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), the Department published a *Compendium of Human Settlements Statistics* as a statistical background for the *Global Report on Human Settlements*. Work is currently under way to revise and update the United Nations international population and housing census recommendations and to revise guidelines on the definition and collection of international migration statistics.

236. The second edition of *The World's Women: Trends and Statistics*, prepared last year for the Fourth World Conference on Women, continued to be the best selling research publication of the Organization on economic and social issues. As part of the follow-up to that Conference and to the World Summit for Social Development, the Department is finalizing the quadrennial *Report on the World Social Situation*, which is to be submitted to the Commission for Social Development at its 1997 session. Particular attention is being given to the role of economic and social institutions and policy instruments in sustaining social security, creating employment opportunities, alleviating poverty and mainstreaming marginalized segments of society. Efforts have also been made to increase the Department's capacity to update information on social conditions and explore new databases on social development issues.

237. Continuing its close monitoring of the world economic and social situation, the Department produced the *World Economic and Social Survey, 1996*. In addition to an analysis of investment policies in developed, transition and developing countries, the Survey focused on investment issues in post-conflict peace-building situations. As part of the follow-up process for Habitat II, the *Survey* presented extensive background information on human settlements, including world urbanization estimates and projections. It also dealt with the elaboration of policies aimed at increasing electricity resources and safe water reserves.

238. The *Survey* also contains a forecast of global economic activity and trade, which, like the Department's note on the world economy at the beginning of 1996 (E/1996/INF/1), draws upon the economic outlook prepared by Project LINK. Project LINK is an international economic research network representing governmental and non-governmental institutes of more than 70 countries. Acting as focal point, the Department carries out development projections and perspective studies and collaborates with experts from the regional commissions and other multilateral development organizations, which provide assessments of the countries not directly represented. Over the past year, the Department convened two meetings of this network — in Pretoria, South Africa, and in New York — to assist in the preparation of short-term forecasts for the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

239. The Department continued its work relating to the implementation of the revised international guidelines on the new System of National Accounts (SNA). It published the third issue of *SNA News and Notes*, an information service of the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts. In this connection, milestones have been established against which the progress of individual countries can be monitored and measured. The Department served as the coordinating body for the review of critical problems in economic statistics, during which issues of quality, timeliness and relevance of economic data were considered. The principal role of the Department was to facilitate direct cooperation and consultation among countries, in particular with national statistical agencies, where the technical and practical expertise in these areas primarily lies.

240. The Department has continued its research and analysis of micro-economic issues in the world economy, seeking to address key issues in the relations between market forces and economic development. It conducted studies on the main factors of business investment in developed and developing countries, as well as in transition and post-conflict economies, as part of ongoing work on the role of enterprises in development, and analyses of privatization of national systems for water supply in developed and developing countries. Other work focused on the evolution of labour markets and international wage distribution, the location of economic activity, enterprise activity in the economies in transition and approaches to market liberalization in economic development.

241. As mandated by the General Assembly, the Department has undertaken several policy reviews, in consultation with the International Monetary Fund, the

World Bank and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, in particular concerning the globalization of finance and its impact on the development process, the external debt situation in developing countries, the net transfer of financial resources among countries, coercive economic measures and economic assistance to countries affected by sanctions imposed by the Security Council. Reports on these questions were submitted to the Assembly during its fiftieth session.

242. The work of the Department on population issues has centred on its mandate to provide secretariat services to the Commission on Population and Development and timely analyses of population trends and policies, including the dissemination of population information and coordination of population activities. Annual meetings with an enlarged membership have more than doubled the servicing requirements for the Commission, whose membership was increased from 27 to 47 pursuant to Economic and Social Council decision 1995/320. No corresponding increase in resources was made available for Secretariat support for the enlarged and revitalized Commission. Although productivity gains from efficiency measures helped meet the requirements of the Commission's twenty-ninth session, reallocation of resources from other mandated activities was also necessary, requiring the postponement of high-priority items in the population work programme.

243. At its twenty-ninth session, held from 26 February to 1 March, the Commission considered the theme selected for 1996, reproductive rights and reproductive health, including population information, education and communication, and reviewed a concise report prepared by the Department on world population monitoring, 1996: reproductive rights and reproductive health. The report was the first in a new set of annual reports covering different themes of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. The Commission confirmed that the theme for the thirtieth session (1997) will be international migration, with special emphasis on the linkages between migration and development, and on gender and age.

244. The Department continued its work on the 1996 revision of *World Population Prospects*, the official United Nations population estimates and projections for all countries of the world. In view of the growing spread of HIV/AIDS, the demographic impact of AIDS has been incorporated into the projections for 28 countries.

245. Other studies by the Department in the field of population concerned such questions as women's education and fertility behaviour, contraceptive use, status of women and child survival, international migration, urbanization, abortion, population policy, relationships between population and the environment and the demographic impact of poverty. Those studies contributed to the ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. Through the Coordinating Unit of the Population Information Network (POPIN), the Department has used the Internet to vastly expand, in a rapid and cost-effective manner, the potential audience for population information. For example, all documents of the Commission on Population and Development, as well as highlights from the United Nations official population estimates and projections, are kept up to date on the Internet.

246. The Department has established a classifications hotline intended to serve as the practical central reference service of international classifications, including the provision of assistance to users of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities. The hotline may be reached through the Internet mailing system, as well as through other media such as letter, facsimile and telephone. The Expert Group on International Classifications at its second meeting (June 1996), on the development of an international classifications work programme covering broad-based economic and social classification concerns, established a strategic plan of action for future work on international classifications.

247. Work continued on the global coordination of the International Comparison Programme with the aim of obtaining comparable data on purchasing power parities and real product. Training workshops were organized in a number of regions jointly with the World Bank in support of a reduced information approach to improve the country coverage of international comparison data. The International Comparison Programme Information Circular was published periodically to promote information exchange between producers and users of Programme results.

248. The Department continued its phased programme to redesign its statistical databases through its UNESIS project (United Nations Economic and Social Information System) and to apply new technologies in electronic publishing and networking for database access and dissemination. New CD-ROMs were issued for the *Statistical Yearbook* and the Women's Indicators and Statistics Database (Wistat), and for the major methodological publication *System of National Accounts, 1993*. Excerpts from the *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics* are now maintained on the United Nations home page on the Internet, and the Department has been actively collaborating with the Department of Public Information and the Publications Board on the development of standards and guidelines for electronic publishing and network dissemination.

249. The Department continued to enhance the Commodity Trade Database (Comtrade) to store and

retrieve information according to the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System and the Standard International Trade Classification, Revision 3. Aggregate import and export data are now being reconciled with information from the International Monetary Fund to lessen reporting burdens on Member States. The Department prepared a draft of the revised concepts and definitions for international merchandise trade statistics and conducted an expert group meeting on the subject to update United Nations methodology in this area in view of new developments in world commerce and to provide substantive guidance and advice to Governments in the context of national execution of their development efforts.

Department for Development Support and Management Services

250. The Department for Development Support and Management Services, headed by Jin Yongjian, has focused its activities on "upstream" technical and substantive guidance and advice to Governments in the context of national execution of their development efforts.

251. The Department has continued to direct ever greater attention to the identification, formulation and substantive monitoring of technical cooperation programmes, with a particular emphasis on evolving thematic requirements of recipient countries in the areas of public administration and development management, including clusters of governance and public administration, public finance and enterprise management, and development planning and policies; and environment management and social development, encompassing assistance in natural resources, environment and energy planning and management, and social development management. Given its strong multidisciplinary technical capacity, the Department has been of particular assistance in formulating cross-sectoral technical cooperation programmes, encompassing interrelated priority development themes.

252. The Department has been increasingly called upon to address the specific requirements of countries in crisis, which need assistance in rebuilding government structures so that basic services can be provided or restored to their populations in a sustainable manner and so that an environment is created in which conflict cannot resume. The Department's assistance has been directed towards rebuilding government institutions, social welfare programmes, multisectoral pilot reconstruction projects and economic recovery programmes, preparation of plans for addressing demobilization, support to vulnerable groups, especially women, re-establishing water, energy and physical infrastructure requirements, promotion of popular participation in rehabilitation, and self-help reconstruction. The colloquium on post-conflict reconstruction strategies organized by the Department in June 1995 stimulated a better exchange of ideas on these issues. The Department has also strengthened its interaction with UNDP, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, Department of Peace-keeping Operations and the United Nations Office for Project Services.

253. A dominant and thematically cross-cutting event of early 1996 was the resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly on public administration and development, which was organized and substantively supported by the Department. It was preceded by a series of six regional meetings focusing on the role of public administration in social development (Stockholm), in economies in transition (Berlin), in post-conflict situations (Rome), in economic development (Manila), in protecting the environment (Rio de Janeiro), and in improving efficiency (Windhoek). At the historic gathering, which included delegations from 72 countries, the General Assembly adopted a resolution (50/225) reflecting a consensus on the need for Governments to strengthen their public administration and financial management capacities, and strongly reaffirming the need to enhance United Nations activities to assist Governments in this area.

254. The Department's work in public administration and management has focused on two main objectives: building worldwide awareness and appreciation of the indispensable role played by public administration in the development process; and strengthening public administration and governance structures in developing countries and economies in transition. Rwanda and Viet Nam are two countries in which such support has been provided. In the former, the focus has been on economic management and the judicial system; in the latter, the Department's assistance targets the public service's institutional, legal, human resources and financial frameworks.

255. The Department continues to be involved, upon request, in providing technical assistance in electoral observation and administration. It coordinated electoral observers for the presidential and legislative elections in Côte d'Ivoire and the United Republic of Tanzania, assisted Brazil in securing voting equipment for future elections and was involved in the organization of the successful elections in Sierra Leone. The Department is assisting the Government of the Gambia in purchasing voting materials and organizing elections scheduled for mid-1996, and is working with the Government of Guyana in the preparation of a budget and coordination of donor assistance for national elections in 1997. In October 1995, a project with the UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States aimed at developing and enhancing democracy, governance and popular

participation in Central Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States became active.

256. In public finance and enterprise management, the primary issues addressed within the Department include enhancing resource mobilization for development, improving financial management, and creating an enabling environment for private investment leading to intensified private sector development. Significant projects include training in tax administration, financial management and public accounting and auditing in the Union économique et monétaire de l'ouest africain; aid management and accountability in Nigeria; aid management, public expenditure management and resource mobilization in the occupied territories; revenue administration expenditure management and training in Haiti; restructuring military enterprises for civilian production in China; managing of economic and technical change in the private sector in Ethiopia; and revenue administration in Jordan.

257. There is an increasing demand for the Department's advisory services and technical assistance in macroeconomic policies and development for transition economies. Following two departmental missions to the Russian Federation for the establishment of a macroeconomic forecasting and information system within the Ministry of the Economy, the Ministry requested the Department to prepare a $5 million project to be submitted to the European Union for financing. The Department also organized several technical cooperation workshops for the economies in transition, focusing, *inter alia,* on development in North-East Asia and along the "new Euro-Asia continental bridge".

258. The Department's work in the areas of environmental management and social development has focused on operational projects and advisory services relating to water and mineral resources, cartography, physical infrastructure, energy, and social and rural development. Strong emphasis has been placed on integrating development in all sectors, including social aspects, with sustainable environmental policies, and on vertical integration between grass-roots and community concerns and national and regional policies.

259. Within the context of the implementation of Agenda 21, the Department has been given the lead role in developing strategies in integrated water resources development. Accordingly, in cooperation with UNDP, assistance in sectoral assessment, diagnostic studies and river-basin programmes has been extended to a number of countries, including Bahrain, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, China, India, Jordan, Morocco, Nepal, Peru, Senegal and Yemen. Assessment of available water resources using modern technologies and state-of-the-art software was conducted. The Department issued its *Groundwater software for Windows* in mid-1995; copies were sold or distributed free of charge at no cost to developing countries.

260. The Department also pursued protection of water resources from contamination and over-exploitation, with a special focus on countries with economies in transition.

261. An example of integrated technical cooperation is found in Yemen, where the Department is implementing a four-year water resources project with a $4 million budget co-financed by the Government of the Netherlands, with additional funds forthcoming from the World Bank. The project addresses the country's extremely acute water shortage, which has resulted from excess demand, over-exploitation of groundwater and a deterioration of water quality. It aims at building national capacity in water resources management by assisting the Government to create a National Water Resources Authority responsible for planning and management.

262. The symposium on corporations, communities and sustainable social development in the minerals sector (New York, May 1996) established a dialogue between the private sector, non-governmental organizations, academia and the international community on the link between mineral resources and social development.

263. In collaboration with the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the Department conducted an environmental audit of a cyanide spill in Guyana, which occurred as the result of a massive dam failure of the tailings pond at a large gold mine. In Cameroon, technical assistance in the form of a diagnosis of the environmental impact of the mining sector was included in the national environmental management plan. In Burkina Faso, an international mining forum, PROMIN '95, was organized jointly by the Government and the Department and financed by UNDP. In Viet Nam, assistance was provided in establishing a new mining law and an administrative framework for its effective operation. In small-scale mining, technical assistance was provided in the Central African Republic, Ethiopia and Mozambique.

264. In Ethiopia, a Department-implemented project recently completed a helicopter-borne electromagnetic, magnetic and radiometric survey. The final data set represents state-of-the-art high resolution, accurately positioned geophysical data specifically tailored to the needs of the mineral exploration industry. The digital data set, which includes complete geologic information, is a valuable tool in the search for new mineral deposits, and will serve as a model for similar surveys in other prospective areas in the country and the region. A mineral investment promotion technical assistance project in Ethiopia has also been implemented, which promotes the country's mineral resources endowments and trains national professionals in small-scale mining. These efforts have now brought

information about Ethiopia's mineral resources into the international arena and, as a result, several foreign and national investors have come forward and applied for mineral rights.

265. In cooperation with the Department of Survey and Mapping of Malaysia, the Department organized an International Meeting on the Establishment of the Regional Permanent Committee on the Geographic Information System (GIS) Infrastructure for Asia and the Pacific, which was held at Kuala Lumpur in July 1995. The purposes of developing a GIS infrastructure are to produce standardized fundamental databases that support high-benefit information products, so as to avoid unnecessary duplication of cost and effort in developing and maintaining those data; to facilitate access to and application of those data; and to allow the integration of other application-specific data by all users.

266. The Department also organized, with the Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities and under the auspices of the Government of Egypt, an International Seminar on Geographic Information Systems, City Sustainability and Environment at Cairo in December 1995. The seminar was among the preparatory activities for Habitat II, and focused on GIS as a tool for efficient urban management, the promotion of GIS and data-sharing standards, and creating awareness and coordination among Governments and agencies likely to benefit in the use and sharing of this technology.

267. In collaboration with the Government of Indonesia and the International Federation of Surveyors, the Department was responsible for the preparation of an International Meeting of Experts on Cadastre at Bogor, Indonesia, in March 1996. The Bogor Declaration proclaimed that a key to a successful cadastral system is one where the three main processes of adjudication of land rights, land transfer and mutation (subdivision or consolidation) are undertaken efficiently, securely and at reasonable cost and speed, in support of an efficient and effective land market.

268. To help disseminate the findings of two innovative projects in China, the International Conference on Coal-bed Methane Development and Utilization was convened in Beijing in October 1995. The Conference reviewed the status of ongoing coal-bed methane recovery projects in China and examined the implications of attracting advanced technologies, promoting more offshore investment, and increasing emphasis on coal-bed methane utilization in other developing countries.

269. The Department has supported the development of a number of national human development reports in countries of Central and Eastern Europe. As a member of the Administrative Committee on Coordination Task Force on Rural Development, the Department was also responsible for the preparation of a report on micro-financing and rural credit, which was presented to the Task Force at its meeting at Geneva on 14 May 1996.

270. The Department participated in the Fourth World Conference on Women, especially in areas concerning basic human needs such as water resources and sanitation. A special issue of *Natural Resources Forum*, the quarterly journal edited by Department staff, is devoted to women and natural resources management. The Department has assisted in the creation of Gender-in-Development Units in a selected number of countries with economies in transition.

271. The Department contributed substantively to the International Conference on Managing Water Resources for Large Cities and Towns held in Beijing in March 1996, as part of the preparations for Habitat II. The Department is co-sponsoring, with UNDP, the Habitat dialogue on water resources and is actively involved in the Habitat dialogue on energy resources.

272. During 1995, the Department had more than 1,400 technical cooperation projects under execution in a dozen substantive sectors, with a total project expenditure of some $80.1 million. Of that amount, projects financed by UNDP represented $34.6 million; those by trust funds, $36.2 million; by the United Nations Population Fund, $4.8 million; and by the United Nations regular programme of technical cooperation, $4.5 million.

273. On a geographical basis, the programme executed by the Department included expenditures of $31.3 million in Africa; $12.2 million in Asia and the Pacific; $19.1 million for interregional and global programmes; $11.1 million in Arab States; $4.1 million in the Americas; and $2.3 million in Europe. Project delivery in Africa accounted for the largest share, 39.1 per cent of total delivery.

2. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

274. The work of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development under its Secretary-General, Rubens Ricupero, during the past year was dominated by the forty-second session of the Trade and Development Board and its subsidiary bodies, by the final preparatory process for the ninth session of the Conference and by the Conference itself, which was held at Midrand, South Africa, from 27 April to 11 May 1996.

275. At the first part of its forty-second session, the Trade and Development Board considered, *inter alia*, the unevenness of opportunities arising from the liberalization of the world economy, and the varied effects of the macroeconomic reforms, especially those undertaken by developing countries. The Board commended the *Trade and*

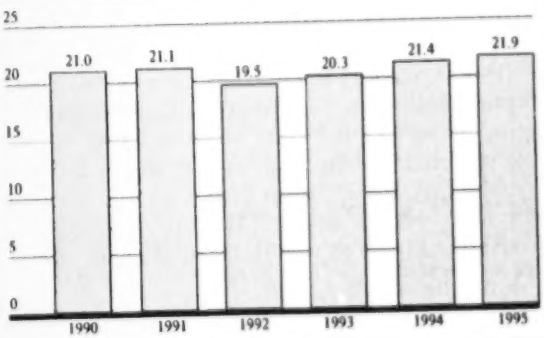
Development Report, 1995, which was used as background for the debate, for its high standards of analysis and willingness to tackle challenging policy issues from a fresh perspective. Special attention was drawn to the lack of improvement in the economic situation of the least developed countries and ongoing difficulties in Africa.

276. The Board held a special session in December 1995 to review the functioning of UNCTAD since the eighth session of the Conference, at which it confirmed the general validity of the direction taken over the past four years but considered that scope existed for making the intergovernmental machinery more responsive to the needs of a rapidly changing world economy. The Board adopted a set of specific recommendations on the intergovernmental structure of UNCTAD, which were submitted to the Conference. The recommendations focus on the number, length and topics of the Board meetings as well as the number of subsidiary bodies.

277. In April 1996, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD announced a major restructuring of the UNCTAD secretariat, reducing the number of divisions from nine to four and cutting the number of high-level posts. Although the restructuring is not directly linked to the financial crisis, it is anticipated that, by creating synergies among programme areas, it will contribute to easing pressures arising from the budgetary crisis. UNCTAD expenditures on technical cooperation projects in 1995 remained at roughly the same level as in the previous few years (see fig. 8).

Figure 8
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development: expenditure on technical cooperation projects, 1990-1995

Millions of United States dollars



278. Intergovernmental preparations for the ninth session of UNCTAD entered their final stage with a meeting of the Trade and Development Board and its Committee of the Whole from 26 February to 29 March 1996. The Committee met to prepare a pre-negotiated text on the four main topics on the Conference's agenda, namely, development policies and strategies in an increasingly interdependent world economy in the 1990s and beyond; promoting international trade as an instrument for development in the post-Uruguay Round world; promoting enterprise development and competitiveness in developing countries and countries in transition; and the institutional implications for the future work of UNCTAD. The Board had before it the outcomes of a series of regional ministerial meetings and of topical seminars held in preparation for the Conference, as well as a report (TD/366) prepared by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD.

279. The theme of the ninth session was "Promoting growth and sustainable development in a globalizing and liberalizing world economy". The Conference set priorities for development action and adopted a 30-page text entitled "A partnership for growth and development", containing a set of recommendations. The Conference also adopted the Midrand Declaration, which gives strong political backing to international cooperation for development and to UNCTAD as the focal point within the United Nations for the integrated treatment of development and interrelated issues in the areas of trade, finance, technology, investment and sustainable development. The Declaration calls for greater partnership between developed, developing and the least developed countries, and emphasizes the benefit of involving civil society in the partnership for development.

280. At its ninth session, UNCTAD agreed on major institutional reform of its intergovernmental machinery so as to focus on a few priority trade and development issues. The Trade and Development Board, the executive body of UNCTAD, is responsible for ensuring the overall consistency of UNCTAD activities. It will meet once a year in regular session to deal with interdependence and global economic issues from a trade and development perspective. It will also review progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the least developed countries for the 1990s and of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, attention being given to the examination of policy lessons drawn from successful development experiences.

281. The following subsidiary bodies of the Trade and Development Board were established: the Commission on Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities; the Commission on Investment, Technology and Related

Financial Issues; and the Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development. The commissions will perform integrated policy work in their respective areas of competence and meet once a year unless otherwise decided by the Board. Each Commission may convene expert meetings of short duration. The total number of expert meetings is not to exceed 10 per annum.

282. The High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Mid-term Global Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s was held in New York from 26 September to 6 October 1995. The meeting provided an opportunity to identify concrete action to accelerate the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted in Paris in 1990. The participants adopted a Declaration stating their determination to accelerate economic and social progress in the least developed countries. The annual report on the least developed countries, published in March 1996, provides comprehensive economic analysis and statistical data on the 40 least developed countries.

283. In September 1995, over 80 trade points representatives from all over the world participated in the first worldwide meeting of members of the Global Trade Point Network. Officially launched in 1994 at the United Nations International Symposium on Trade Efficiency, the Network has rapidly emerged as one of the major players in electronic commerce. At the end of 1995, 47 trade points in 27 countries were in operation.

284. The Third United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects of the Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices met under UNCTAD auspices in November 1995. The Set of Principles and Rules, which was adopted in 1980, is the only universally applicable international instrument on competition policy. The Conference affirmed the fundamental role of competition law and policy for sound economic development, and most Member States expressed the view that trade and competition should be retained as a priority area of work in UNCTAD.

285. In December 1995, UNCTAD published the *World Investment Report, 1995*, which deals with transnational corporations and competitiveness. The report is the main information source on trends in foreign direct investment and on the activities of transnational corporations.

286. In the area of privatization and enterprise development, UNCTAD organized, in cooperation with the Government of Uzbekistan, UNDP and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, an international business conference on privatization in Uzbekistan in October 1995. The event achieved very concrete results: some 15 business agreements and understandings were signed. A new chapter was opened in the work of UNCTAD by bringing together for the first time government representatives and international business executives and organizations.

287. The Standing Committee on Developing Services Sectors, at its third session in September 1995, examined ways of enhancing access to, and use of, information networks and distribution channels. It also assessed the impact of progressive liberalization of imports of services on the development of competitive service sectors. The Committee agreed that UNCTAD should adopt a sustained, result-oriented approach aimed at enhancing developing countries' access to, and use of, information networks and distribution channels. The Committee also met in November 1995 to consider ways to strengthen the insurance sector in developing countries to allow them to benefit from the liberalization process.

288. The first session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Trading Opportunities in the New International Trading Context was held in October 1995. The Group analysed opportunities arising from the implementation of the Uruguay Round and the modalities for giving effect to the special provisions on the least developed countries contained in the Final Act. At its second session, in February 1996, the Working Group adopted a set of recommendations calling for implementation of the Uruguay Round commitments while recognizing the need for assistance to weaker economies to enable them to reap the benefits of the Uruguay Round.

289. The Special Committee on Preferences held its twenty-second session in October 1995 with the objective of revitalizing the Generalized System of Preferences. A comprehensive policy review of the System was conducted in the light of the results of the Uruguay Round and the consequent erosion of existing preference margins enjoyed by developing countries. A number of proposals were agreed with a view to revitalizing the System and expanding its coverage.

290. The Standing Committee on Commodities, at its fourth session in November 1995, addressed issues related to diversification and the environment. It agreed that UNCTAD provided an appropriate forum for international discussions on the reflection of environmental costs and benefits in prices of products and on other modalities for internalization, including new approaches to international cooperation in this area. Member States felt that future work on commodities in UNCTAD should proceed only with the active participation of relevant enterprises and industry experts. A one-day meeting of the United Nations Conference on Natural Rubber was convened on 28 March 1996 and decided to extend the deadline for signature of the International Natural Rubber Agreement until 31 July 1996.

291. The Ad Hoc Working Group on Trade, Environment and Development, at its third and final session in November 1995, focused on the need for international cooperation towards ensuring transparency and coherence in making environmental and trade policies mutually supportive.

292. The Ad Hoc Working Group to Explore the Issue of Structural Adjustment for the Transition to Disarmament met in November 1995 and recommended that, in the process of preparation for the ninth session of UNCTAD, the Board examine whether a work programme on structural adjustment for the transition to disarmament should be envisaged.

3. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

293. The United Nations Environment Programme, headed by Elizabeth Dowdeswell, has introduced organizational and structural change in order to improve programme delivery and to respond effectively to the important tasks mandated to the Programme by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

294. UNEP is participating in the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa and is a member of the Initiative's Steering Committee. As chair of the Working Group on Water, it promotes an equity-led approach to water resources management in African communities under which it is proposed that all future water policies, plans and programmes in Africa should be assessed in terms of their economic viability, environmental sustainability and equitable use. In Burundi and Rwanda, UNEP and UNDP are pooling resources to support the rehabilitation of the environment damaged by war. At the request of the Government of Rwanda, the two programmes held a subregional workshop on sustainable development at Kigali in September 1995. In December 1995, UNEP organized, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa and the Organization of African Unity, the sixth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment.

295. In the Asia and Pacific region, UNEP co-sponsored, with UNDP, the Asian Development Bank and the Government of Thailand, the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, the first event in Asia to bring together environmental ministers with senior industry officials and corporate leaders. The Conference, held at Bangkok in November 1995, adopted a Regional Action Programme for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development, 1996-2000. In consultation with Governments and media, UNEP also developed the first Environmental Information and Communication Strategy for the Asia-Pacific Region, covering the period 1995-2000. A handbook entitled "Strategies for environmental citizenship" is available to Governments and non-governmental organizations to assist them in their information activities.

296. UNEP participated in the third Ministerial Conference on Environment for Europe, held at Sofia in October 1995, where it was given the responsibility, jointly with the Council of Europe, to guide the implementation of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy through a forum and task force. The results of a meeting on military activities and the environment in Europe were made available to the Sofia Conference. UNEP initiatives in Europe also included the development of an environmental action framework for the integrated management of the Caspian Sea and a review of the implementation of Agenda 21 in the field of water.

297. With the support of UNEP, the ninth Meeting of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean was held at Havana in September 1995. This meeting was followed up by an inter-sessional committee meeting of Ministers of the Environment (Mexico City, May 1996), at which UNEP was asked to develop a coordination mechanism for all environmental projects undertaken by United Nations agencies at the regional level. UNEP also increased circulation in the region of its bimonthly *Tierramerica* newspaper supplement, which by the end of 1996 is expected to reach an audience of over 3 million people.

298. In the Middle East, UNEP participated in the peace process through the multilateral working groups on water resources and the environment. It also contributed to inter-agency meetings in support of socio-economic development in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

299. In 1995-1996, eight additional States became parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, bringing the number of parties to the Convention to 132. Three additional States became parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, bringing the number of parties to that Convention to 47.

300. Nine additional States became parties to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, bringing the number of parties to 157. Ten additional States became parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, bringing the number of parties to 156. The last meeting of the parties to the Montreal Protocol (Vienna, December 1995) approved adjustments to the Protocol which strengthen control measures on substances that deplete the ozone layer. The Global Environment Facility is assisting countries with economies in transition

to implement the control measures of the Protocol. The Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol has approved as at December 1995 $425 million for 1,200 projects in 93 countries. With the incentive provided by the Multilateral Fund, some developing countries could achieve total phase-out of ozone-depleting substances well ahead of the global target year of 2010.

301. Twenty-one additional States became parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, bringing the number of parties to 101. The third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention (Geneva, September 1995) decided to amend the Convention with respect to a prohibition by each party member of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the European Union and Liechtenstein of all transboundary movements of hazardous wastes destined for final disposal in other States. It also phases out by 31 December 1997 and prohibits as from that date all transboundary movements of hazardous wastes for recovery, recycling, reclamation, direct re-use or alternative uses in other States.

302. Fifty-four additional States became parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, bringing the number of parties to 152. The first meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity (Paris, September 1995) designed the Convention's programme of work for 1995-1997, which was subsequently approved by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at its second meeting (Jakarta, November 1995). The Conference of the Parties decided on Montreal as the permanent seat of its secretariat, and invited UNEP to liaise with the Commission on Sustainable Development to organize an open-ended intergovernmental workshop on the study of the relationship between the Convention and other related international conventions. A global biodiversity assessment report and an executive summary for policy makers were launched at the Conference, providing for the first time a scientific state-of-the-art review of the main issues of biodiversity.

303. At an intergovernmental conference in Washington, D.C., in November 1995, 110 Governments adopted the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities and decided that UNEP should serve as the initiative's secretariat. The major tasks of UNEP in this new role include implementation of a comprehensive plan of action to address the threats posed to the coastal and marine environment and associated river basins from land-based activities, especially practices involving persistent organic pollutants and municipal waste waters. In July 1996, the Economic and Social Council recommended to the General Assembly for adoption at its fifty-first session a draft resolution endorsing the Global Programme of Action.

304. At its eighteenth session, in May 1995, the Governing Council of UNEP identified persistent organic pollutants as a major threat to health and the environment and initiated an assessment of the status of information on 12 priority pollutants. UNEP initiated the assessment process on behalf of the Inter-organizational Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals. UNEP has also ensured coordination between the ongoing assessments of those pollutants and the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities. The assessment was completed at Manila in June 1996 at a meeting of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS) Ad Hoc Working Group on persistent organic pollutants. Drawing on that assessment, the subsequent IFCS intergovernmental meeting at Manila concluded that enough was known about persistent organic pollutants to initiate global action to reduce or eliminate emissions of such pollutants, and recommended that the global action should include a legally binding instrument.

305. UNEP played a key role in the implementation of the international coral reef initiative. Through its Regional Seas Programme, UNEP facilitated the convening of regional workshops on the subject and provided technical assistance to regions. UNEP also provided financial and technical support for the eighth International Coral Reef Initiative Symposium, held in Panama in June 1996.

306. UNEP continued its substantive support and contribution to the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification. At its seventh session (Nairobi, August 1995), the Committee reviewed the implementation of its resolution 5/1 on urgent action for Africa, and discussed issues including the organization and physical location of the Convention's permanent secretariat and the creation of a scientific and technical committee.

307. In response to the recommendation of Agenda 21 for UNEP to concentrate on coordinating functions arising from the increasing number of international legal agreements and the functioning of the secretariats of environmental conventions, meetings were held in July 1995 and January 1996 that achieved considerable progress on substantive issues of common concern and on common administrative issues.

308. The Governing Council also requested the Executive Director to place UNEP expertise in forest-related issues at the disposal of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Panel on Forests of the Commission on Sustainable Development. UNEP is also the lead agency of the Panel's programme on the needs and requirements of countries with low forest

cover, on which a report was submitted to the Panel at its second session (Geneva, March 1996).

309. In the area of biosafety, the UNEP International Technical Guidelines for Safety in Biotechnology were adopted at the Global Consultation of Government-designated Experts (Cairo, December 1995), following a consensus-building process encompassing a wide spectrum of stakeholders, including the biotechnology industry. A capacity-building programme related to the implementation of the Guidelines has been formulated by UNEP for submission to potential donors.

310. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, at its 11th plenary meeting (Rome, December 1995), approved the 1995 second assessment report. Written by some 2,000 leading scientists and technical experts from about 130 countries, the assessment report will improve the world's understanding of the causes of global climate change. UNEP contributed to the Panel's work by integrating climate-related concerns into its activities on biodiversity, desertification control, protection of the marine environment and promotion of sustainable production and consumption.

311. As decided by the Governing Council at its eighteenth session, UNEP, as a partner in the World Climate Programme, coordinates international activities under thrust 3 of the Climate Agenda, "Studies of climate impact assessments and response strategies to reduce vulnerabilities". Under the general umbrella of the World Climate Impact Assessment and Response Strategies Programme, which is a component of the World Climate Programme, UNEP has, with funding from the Global Environment Facility, carried out country studies on sources and sinks of greenhouse gases, greenhouse gas abatement costing and climate impact assessment and adaptation.

312. In April 1996, UNEP submitted to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fourth session a survey of information systems related to environmentally sound technologies as a contribution to the Commission's deliberations on the transfer of environmentally sound technology. The Commission invited UNEP to continue its work to develop an information systems network on environmentally sound technologies so as to increase compatibility and cooperation among information systems and sources. UNEP was also invited to consider developing and maintaining a catalogue of environmentally sound technology-related information systems, and eventually to make such a catalogue publicly available in printed form or on diskette and through global networks, such as the Internet.

313. A new Charter for Sustainable Tourism has been developed and is ready for implementation. The Charter is the result of the World Conference on Sustainable Tourism (Canary Islands, April 1995). Guided by Agenda 21, tourism associations, industries and Governments designed this valuable tool with the collaboration of UNEP.

314. As requested by the Governing Council at its eighteenth session, UNEP convened with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) the first negotiation session on the development of a prior informed consent convention for information exchange on international trade of certain hazardous chemicals and pesticides (Brussels, March 1996). In addition, a meeting of Government-designated experts was convened at Copenhagen in April 1996 on further measures for the sound management of hazardous chemicals.

315. UNEP continued convening a Group of Experts on Liability and Compensation for Environmental Damage Arising from Military Activities (Geneva, September 1995, and London, May 1996). This process has produced an agreed set of conclusions on major issues which will contribute to the work of the United Nations Compensation Commission and will promote the development of an international regime of liability and compensation for environmental damage.

316. UNEP is developing a new state of the environment report, the Global Environment Outlook (GEO). GEO will report on environmental priorities as defined by regional environmental policy bodies, analyse causal relationships, identify emerging issues and present, where possible, alternative policy options for action. The GEO report series will be produced through a cooperative, participatory and region-based assessment process fully involving regional policy makers, institutions and experts linked by a global network of approximately 20 collaborating centres.

317. UNEP collaboration with the insurance sector resulted in the signing of the Statement of Environmental Commitment by 23 major insurance firms. An insurance statement of commitment was launched in November 1995 and the first workshop to develop modalities for implementation was held in London in May 1996. The agreement, co-signed and supported by UNEP, expresses the industry's commitment to sustainable development.

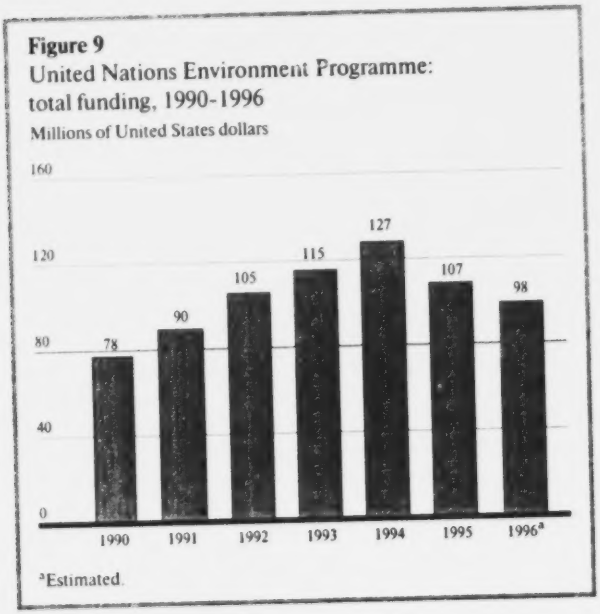
318. In follow-up activities related to the Fourth World Conference on Women, UNEP has started work with United Nations and non-governmental organization partners to design guidelines for gender-sensitive desertification control projects and to promote women's indigenous knowledge as it relates to biodiversity issues.

319. The UNEP Global Youth Forum (San Francisco, United States of America, August 1995) was the largest ever, bringing together 459 delegates from 60 countries. More than 800 children from 83 countries participated in the International Children's Conference (Eastbourne, United

Kingdom, October 1995), where, for the first time, children from around the world came together to communicate their concerns about the world environment.

320. The Governing Council of UNEP at its eighteenth session approved a programme activity budget of $90 million-$105 million for the biennium 1996-1997 (see fig. 9). The demands placed on UNEP since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 have not been matched by any significant increase in financial resources. The further expected reduction in voluntary contributions to the Environment Fund of UNEP and the unpredictability of payments constitute principal constraints for the future of the Programme and its ability to provide an effective service to the international community.

Figure 9
United Nations Environment Programme: total funding, 1990-1996



[a]Estimated.

4. United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

321. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), under the direction of Wally N'Dow, continued to focus its efforts in three main areas: providing technical assistance to Member States for the formulation and implementation of sustainable human settlements policies and programmes; strengthening the capacity of the public, private and community sectors at the national and local levels to improve living conditions in rural and urban settlements, through the provision of adequate shelter, infrastructure and services, particularly to the poor and disadvantaged; and raising the awareness of the global community of the significance of human settlements development for achieving sustainable economic growth, environmental protection, poverty reduction, social equity and gender equality. These priority activities came together at the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), held at Istanbul from 3 to 14 June 1996.

322. Building on this momentum, Habitat II succeeded in becoming a conference of partnerships, solutions and commitments for sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world. Delegations from 171 countries participated in the Conference. A total of about 16,400 participants, 8,000 of them from non-governmental organizations, took part in either the main Conference, the Non-Governmental Organization Forum or other related activities, all of which attracted extensive global media coverage. Virtually the entire United Nations system was represented, with most participating agencies sponsoring numerous parallel activities.

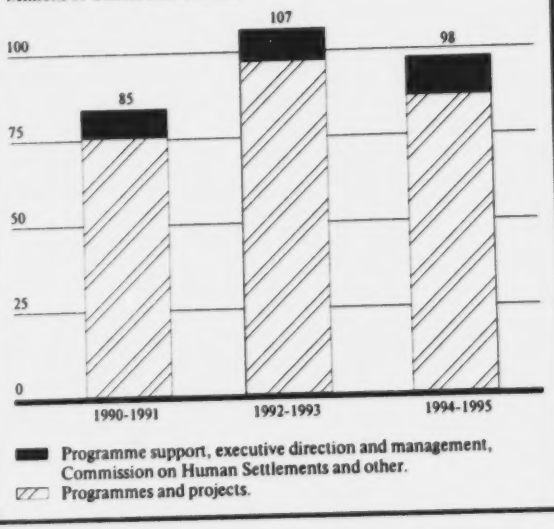
323. A unique aspect of the Conference was its openness to the organizations and institutions of civil society. Encouraged by the Centre, most national delegations included local authorities, non-governmental organizations and representatives of the private sector. Through a process of partners' hearings, the Conference provided an opportunity for representatives of municipal and local authorities, the private sector, parliamentarians, trade unions, scientific bodies and foundations, non-governmental organizations and grass-roots organizations to present their views. With more than 500 mayors of cities taking part in the Conference and the parallel World Assembly of Cities, Habitat II witnessed the beginning of a formal partnership between mayors and local authority associations and the United Nations which will be crucial to the implementation of follow-up activities.

324. The inclusionary nature of the preparatory process and the Conference also resulted in the approval of a global plan of action that broadly reflects the views and recommendations of all concerned. That plan of action, the Habitat Agenda, contains detailed programmes of action to realize economic and social development and environmental sustainability in the urbanized world of the twenty-first century.

325. The Centre carried forward its work in a number of other areas during the period under review. Technical cooperation was undertaken in 83 countries, especially in the areas of urban governance, environmental planning and management, post-disaster reconstruction, shelter policy and urban poverty reduction. Among the significant interregional programmes currently being implemented are the Urban Management Programme (in association with UNDP and the World Bank), the Sustainable Cities Programme (in association with UNEP) and the Housing

and Urban Indicators Programme. For the biennium 1994-1995, total expenditures for the Centre amounted to $97.9 million (see fig. 10).

Figure 10
United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat): expenditure, 1990-1995



326. As in previous years, Africa continues to be a primary focus of Habitat's cooperation activities. On the basis of partnership funding arrangements with several Governments, the Centre expanded its applied interregional research work in the areas of community development, environmental infrastructure, gender, settlements upgrading and local Agenda 21. The Centre also expanded its programmes for local government capacity-building, especially in countries with economies in transition and in Africa and Latin America.

327. In accordance with its mandate as the reference point in the United Nations system for human settlements research and information, the Centre completed a number of major initiatives. These included the publication of the second *Global Report on Human Settlements*, which focused on the policy issues raised by urbanization, and the completion of a comprehensive *Compendium of Human Settlements Statistics* in collaboration with the Statistics Division of the United Nations Secretariat.

328. The Centre served as the lead agency for the global observance in 1996 of World Water Day and helped organize the International Conference on Land and Security of Tenure held in India in January 1996. One aim of these efforts is the establishment of an inter-agency programme on land and land management.

329. Following a ground-breaking initiative of the Commission on Human Settlements, Habitat took the lead in collaboration with the Centre for Human Rights and other United Nations entities in reviewing the human rights aspects of shelter and shelter provision as derived from existing international human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This culminated in the commitment by Governments at Habitat II to the full and progressive realization of the right to adequate housing.

330. To improve efficiency in the preparation and management of country programmes in the post-Istanbul period, the Centre decided to establish, with the support of host Governments, decentralized offices in Asia and Latin America. This initiative is part of an ongoing series of internal reform and reorganization measures designed to increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

C. Regional development activities

331. The five regional commissions play a crucial role in raising the level of economic and social development in their spheres of activity and in strengthening relations among countries, United Nations organizations and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. During the past year, as the work of the Organization became more decentralized, the regional commissions shouldered even greater responsibilities. In keeping with the system-wide process of reform, the commissions continued to examine their activities, adjust priorities, restructure programmes and reorganize their staffs to increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

1. Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

332. The cross-currents of modest improvement in Africa's economic performance and major reforms in the programmes, organizational structure and management practices of the Economic Commission for Africa defined the orientation of work of ECA under its Executive Secretary, K. Y. Amoako.

333. The Commission undertook studies on a number of issues, including poverty reduction through improved food security; financing and operation of transport and communications; development of subregional energy supply; marketing strategies for the enhancement of mineral utilization; problems and prospects for large-scale irrigation in Africa; the integration of environmental considerations

into agricultural planning and policy strategies; enhancement of public sector performance, especially in the areas of fiscal policies; and improving public expenditure for rural development.

334. The Commission continued its support for regional capacity-building programmes, in particular the Second Transport and Communications Decade in Africa and the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa. In collaboration with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), progress was made in implementing the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community. Efforts in this regard focused on the preparation of various proposals to the Treaty.

335. An international conference on reviving private investment in Africa: partnerships for growth and development, organized by ECA, was held at Accra in July 1996 and attended by about 650 participants drawn from African public and private sectors as well as business executives from outside the region. The Conference was a collaborative effort among ECA, UNDP, the Global Coalition for Africa, the African Business Round Table, the World Bank group and bilateral donors such as the Governments of Japan and the Republic of Korea, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the Overseas Development Administration (United Kingdom) and the International Development Research Centre (Canada).

336. A key event at the Conference was a round-table summit meeting of heads of State and Government or senior political leaders from eight African countries and six business leaders from within and outside Africa. Another important initiative was the launching of the African Capital Markets Forum — a multi-country advocacy group bringing together members of stock exchanges, leasing companies and financial institutions such as brokerage firms and investment funds.

337. In the context of follow-up activities related to the cycle of world conferences, ECA has promoted collaboration with other United Nations agencies and regional intergovernmental organizations. Pursuant to the Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development held at Cairo in 1994, ECA convened an expert non-governmental organization workshop on the Dakar/Ngor Declaration and participated in the joint ECA/OAU/African Development Bank missions of the African Population Commission to assess country experiences of some Member States in implementing the Dakar/Ngor Declaration and the Cairo Programme of Action. ECA also convened a senior policy seminar on the social impact of HIV/AIDS in households and family in Africa, held at Addis Ababa in October 1995.

338. With regard to the Fourth World Conference on Women, ECA organized a meeting of the Bureau of the Fifth Regional Conference on Women, which prepared the African Platform for the Conference. The main objective of the meeting was to discuss a framework for accelerating the implementation of the global and regional platforms for action in Africa. The framework will be disseminated to all national machineries, relevant ministries, non-governmental organizations, training and research institutions for their use in the implementation process. ECA also co-organized the first Global Trade Fair and Investment Forum (Accra, June/July 1996), which offered women entrepreneurs opportunities for networking, skill development, information sharing, market expansion and forging of partnerships for expanded trade and investment.

339. The intergovernmental machinery for monitoring the implementation of the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development in Africa is the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Human Development, in conjunction with its follow-up Ministerial Committee of Fifteen. At the first meeting of the Committee (Addis Ababa, November 1995), several Member States presented country reports on the state of human development in their countries.

340. The Steering Committee of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, launched in March, is co-chaired by the Executive Secretary of ECA and the Administrator of UNDP. In this capacity, ECA will lead or co-lead several priority areas, including South-South cooperation, strengthening civil society, strengthening the informal sector and harnessing information technology for development.

341. During the reporting period, ECA undertook major reviews of its programme and budgeting systems, human resources management, skills assessment and communications strategy. The new programme orientation, outlined in a document entitled "Serving Africa better: strategic directions for the Economic Commission for Africa", focuses on five major themes: facilitating economic and social policy analysis, ensuring food security and sustainable development, strengthening development management, harnessing information for development, and promoting regional cooperation and integration. There are two cross-cutting issues, namely, gender and capacity-building.

342. The process of reform at ECA was marked by extensive consultations, first with the staff of the Commission and then with 40 high-level African experts drawn from government, the private sector, academia and civil society as well as the Bureau of the Commission. The third stage was a meeting in early April with the Commission's principal partners: representatives of United

Nations agencies, bilateral donors from developed and developing countries, and some international foundations. The new directions document was endorsed at the thirty-first session of the Commission and the 22nd meeting of the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Economic and Social Development (April/May 1996).

343. At its thirty-first session the Commission also adopted the African Information Society Initiative as a framework for accelerating Africa's entry into the global information system. The Initiative was developed by a high-level working group on information and communication technologies for Africa established in 1995 at the request of the Conference of Ministers. During the session, two special events were organized. The first was a panel discussion on the Framework Agenda for Building and Utilizing Critical Capacities in Africa, which completed a two-year cycle of consultations; the final document is to be published later this year. The second event, held during the ministerial session, was a high-level forum on public expenditure and the poor that examined, in the context of limited Government resources, various principles and measures for targeting public expenditure for poverty eradication and prevention.

344. A number of the Commission's mandated activities were terminated, deferred or curtailed, while several measures were put in place to achieve efficiencies, including rationalization of the use of resources for travel and of meetings and documentation.

2. Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)

345. Under the direction of the Executive Secretary, Yves Berthelot, the Economic Commission for Europe continues to promote and facilitate better understanding and agreement on policies, norms and practices among countries of the region and to strengthen their integration and cooperation. This is done through policy analysis and dialogue on macroeconomic and sectoral issues; the continued elaboration of conventions, norms and standards; and a programme of assistance to the transition process of the former centrally planned economies.

346. In the light of new realities in the ECE region, the Commission established, at a special session in September 1995, an ad hoc working group to define strategic directions for the Commission's future activities. The Working Group was created pursuant to the decision taken by the Commission in April 1995 to adopt, at its jubilee session in April 1997, a declaration on strengthening economic cooperation in Europe. To obtain the data necessary for the Working Group to complete its task, a questionnaire was sent to all ECE member Governments. Analysis of replies by the Working Group is under way and negotiations among members are being held. Changes in the programme of work and the organization of the secretariat will be implemented as a result of this reform exercise.

347. ECE intensified its relationships with relevant organizations in the region, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, OECD, the European Union, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the Council of Europe and subregional organizations such as the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Central European Initiative and the Council of Baltic States. Relations with the private sector have also expanded, as private enterprises manifest a growing interest in the ECE forum. For example, during the Commission's annual session in April 1996, a number of chief executive officers from major corporations participated in a round-table discussion with high-level government officials to discuss cooperation for sustainable industrial development. Closer ties to the private sector were also manifested by the business community's increased financial contributions to the ECE technical cooperation trust fund for industry: structural change and development.

348. The economic analysis conducted by ECE is published in a number of annual and occasional publications. The *Economic Bulletin for Europe*, vol. 47 (1995) and the *Economic Survey of Europe in 1995-1996* continue to provide annual, in-depth analysis of current economic developments in Europe, North America and the States of the former Soviet Union. Both publications give special emphasis to developments in the transition economies of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union and to their progress in creating market economies.

349. The *Survey* was also used by the senior economic advisers to ECE Governments as background for their annual exchange of information on the development of national economies and on policies and programmes. In the area of sustainable development the assessment of the situation in transition countries was continued, in cooperation with the Committee on Environmental Policy, and a workshop on economic instruments for environmental policies: the response of the private sector was organized by the Governments of the Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, Norway and Romania in cooperation with OECD and FAO.

350. Population projects in the fields of international migration, fertility and reproductive health and population ageing, which were carried out with financial assistance from the United Nations Population Fund during 1992-1995, were completed and assessed by an independent

evaluation team. ECE and the Fund also collaborated on the formulation of a population programme for the period from 1996 to 1999, which focused on the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development and the European Population Conference in countries with economies in transition. ECE also published issues Nos. 6 and 7 of the semi-annual *International Migration Bulletin* containing up-to-date information on migration flows, legislation and meetings in the region.

351. During the period under review, ECE further consolidated its work in the Conference of European Statisticians with the publication of its first-ever statistical yearbook, providing unique statistical profiles of the 55 member States, together with comparative data on economic and social life in the region. In addition, with the help of EUROSTAT, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and Statistics Sweden, a volume of gender-specific statistics was issued. The Commission also established a flow of essential data on the economies of all countries in transition, which are giving high priority to receiving technical assistance from ECE in the statistical area.

352. The trade facilitation programme of ECE developed further the norms of the United Nations Rules for Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport (EDIFACT) and published two new EDIFACT directories. In addition, six ECE trade facilitation recommendations were revised, including a greatly enlarged recommendation on units of measure, which represents important progress in the updating of existing recommendations. A substantial site on the World Wide Web of the Internet was established and provides access to all United Nations/ECE trade facilitation recommendations as well as extensive information on EDIFACT.

353. A study on trade and investment finance in the transition economies was prepared by the secretariat and used during the session of the Committee on the Development of Trade and by an international forum attended by more than 300 participants representing government, state and private sectors. The dissemination of legal, statistical and other relevant information for investors and business operators continued through the quarterly publication *East-West Investment News*.

354. To facilitate distribution and use of agricultural standards, a World Wide Web site was established and is being upgraded and completed. Several new documents and studies were produced during the year, and close cooperation continued with relevant organizations, including OECD, FAO, CODEX Alimentarius, the European Union and the International Organization for Standardization.

355. The secretariat of the ECE Timber Committee completed a study on the projected supply and demand of wood and forest products over the next 30 years, entitled "European timber trends and prospects into the twenty-first century", and began work on the Forest Resource Assessment 2000, a global effort within which the Committee is responsible for temperate and boreal forests.

356. In the field of industry and technology, a review of the major changes in overall science and technology policies in ECE member States was undertaken, and a number of publications were produced, including the annual reviews of the chemical industry and the steel market, *World Engineering Industries and Automation: Performance and Prospects*, *World Industrial Robots*, an updated version of the *Directory of Chemical Producers and Products*, the biannual review of iron and steel scrap, a study on privatization and changing ownership in the steel industry and the *Directory of the Steel Industry and the Environment*.

357. Work on coal was dominated by issues related to the restructuring of the coal industries, the clean use of coal, and the development of international guidelines, classifications and standards for the sustainable exploitation and use of solid fuels. Activities in the area of electric power focused on the economic reform process in Central and Eastern Europe, environmental protection and the interconnection of international power grids. A symposium on coal-fired power generation, the environment and public acceptance was organized. A study on prospects of natural gas and electric power generation and their impact on the development of the gas and electric power industries was prepared. In the area of natural gas, a glossary on national gas resources was completed and a study on measures of gas conservation: household gas consumption and appliances was prepared. The gas centre, a technical cooperation programme, completed its first year of operation, in the course of which four training seminars were organized, four publications were issued, and work was initiated on the development of training manuals and a natural gas database.

358. Under the auspices of the Energy Efficiency 2000 project, trade fair business briefing sessions were held in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Switzerland. A preparatory assistance project to develop energy efficiency demonstration zones in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary and the Russian Federation, supported by the Global Environment Facility, was carried out. A joint project with the European Union SAVE programme on energy efficiency standards was initiated. New work on financial mechanisms for energy efficiency investments in the Russian Federation was started in collaboration with EBRD, the World Bank, Russian commercial banks and

western countries. An analysis of the energy situation and policies in the ECE region, with particular reference to economies in transition, and an analysis of energy and CO_2 emission policies and projections were prepared. A workshop on the use of solar energy was held at Bet Berl, Israel.

359. A major highlight during the period under consideration was the third Ministerial Conference on Environment for Europe, held at Sofia in October 1995, for which ECE had been entrusted with overall coordination. At the Conference, Ministers confirmed the important role of ECE in this process and mandated it with the coordination of the next Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, to be held in Denmark in 1998. During the intervening period, a draft convention will be negotiated under ECE auspices on access to environmental information and public participation in environmental decision-making.

360. With support at the policy level from the Sofia Ministerial Conference, ECE is developing a programme to review national environmental performance and to examine environmental conditions and practices compared to domestic policy and targets and relevant international commitments. The Sofia Conference also called for strengthening the implementation of and compliance with transboundary environmental conventions administered by ECE, in particular on air pollution, water management, environmental impact assessment and industrial accidents. Under the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, administered by ECE, three new protocols are being negotiated on persistent organic pollutants, heavy metals and nitrogen compounds. The air pollution convention has been presented at meetings of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, UNEP and the World Health Organization.

361. With regard to inland transport, ECE contributed to European integration through the elaboration of uniform norms and standards regarding transport, the facilitation of border crossing and the drawing up of coherent infrastructure networks. The European road, rail and combined transport infrastructure networks established under the relevant ECE agreements were being extended to Central Asian and Caucasian ECE member States. A European Agreement on Main Inland Waterways of International Importance was adopted which complements the already existing international instruments providing for the development of international infrastructure networks in Europe. The Commission continued to make substantive progress in the elaboration, updating and revision of technical requirements for the international transport of dangerous goods by road and inland waterway, and their harmonization with those concerning transport of such goods by rail, sea and air, and initiated work on the elaboration of a European agreement concerning the international carriage of dangerous goods by inland waterway.

362. The Commission also made progress in the international harmonization of requirements for the construction of vehicles, covering a wide range of factors relating to active and passive safety, environmental protection, energy consumption and the removal of technical barriers to trade. The agreement under which this work was done was updated to streamline the procedures and increase their efficiency; worldwide application is being sought and a proposal for a global agreement is under consideration. The Commission paid special attention to road safety, concentrating on the international harmonization of road traffic regulations, road signs and signals by updating legal instruments and adopting recommendations. In the area of transport facilitation, work continues on a major revision of the TIR Convention (1975), undertaken to cope with increasing fraud and organized crime while ensuring that international road transport and trade in Europe will not be hampered by cumbersome and expensive border-crossing procedures.

363. Preparatory work, in close cooperation with the European Union, the European Conference of Ministers of Transport and other international organizations, has been pursued for the regional Conference on Transport and the Environment to be held at Vienna in November 1997.

3. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

364. The twenty-sixth session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean was held at San José, from 15 to 20 April 1996. The Commission secretariat headed by the Executive Secretary, Gert Rosenthal, presented to the Governments of the region two reports, on strengthening development: the interplay of macro- and micro-economics and on the economic experience of the last 15 years: Latin America and the Caribbean, 1980-1995. Those reports indicate that, after a decade of adjustments and fundamental structural reforms, most Latin American and Caribbean countries have increased their rates of growth, reduced inflationary pressures and stabilized their macroeconomic environment.

365. Reform of ECLAC is reflected in three distinct areas: first, the changing content and scope of the work programme; secondly, the evolving manner in which ECLAC interacts with its member Governments; and thirdly, changes in organization, management styles and even attitudes or work ethic to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness.

366. As circumstances in the region and its external environment have changed, the Commission has updated its message to encompass major emerging issues, such as debt and adjustment in the 1980s and sustainable development and globalization in the 1990s.

367. As to the relationship between ECLAC and its member Governments, an effort has been made to interact on a continual basis with technicians and authorities at the national level, to receive inputs from them and to transmit to them the Commission's institutional opinions. This interaction takes place among a wide array of national actors (ministries of finance, economics, trade, environment and planning) as well as the academic community. In addition, missions to countries, and the presence of subregional offices in some of the larger ones, the holding of seminars and meetings of governmental experts and visits by senior public officials to ECLAC headquarters all play an important role.

368. ECLAC has made major efforts over the past five years to develop a more efficient and effective secretariat. This effort will be maintained and institutionalized in its new efficiency programme. Further, the Commission agreed at its last regular session to create an ad hoc working group open to all ECLAC member States to define priorities within the approved work programme and recommend strategic directions for future activities. This working group met at Santiago in July 1996.

369. ECLAC has thus made major efforts to adapt to changing circumstances. At the substantive level, it has updated its analytical work to reflect the priority issues emerging from development efforts in Latin America and the Caribbean and from intraregional and international cooperation. At the organizational level, it is seeking to make optimum use of the resources placed at its disposal and to implement its work programme in accordance with exacting standards of efficiency and effectiveness. This effort to update its activities and methods has been carried out in consultation with member Governments, especially within the framework of the Commission's biennial meetings.

370. In the past year, ECLAC has continued to be a meeting-place for governmental officials, with the participation of members of the academic community and non-governmental organizations. In addition to its normal seminars and expert group meetings, the secretariat organized the 11th ordinary meeting of the Central American Economic Cooperation Committee (Antigua, Guatemala, September 1995); the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Meeting Preparatory to Habitat II (Santiago, November 1995); and the 22nd meeting of the presiding officers of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean (Santiago, May 1996).

371. The Commission continues to provide inputs to member Governments on issues including reform of the public sector (with special emphasis on the reform of the planning and budgeting system and the decentralization experiences in countries of the region); reform of the financial markets (with special focus on the region's participation in international financial markets, short-term monetary and financial planning and the financial system and social equity in changing production patterns); the nature of innovation and its application to the productive sector (with emphasis on strengthening the region's technological capacities and enhancing its international competitiveness); the trade liberalization process in the region (with particular attention to its influence on key macroeconomic variables and the overall evaluation of export promotion policies pursued by the countries of the region); poverty reduction strategies (follow-up activities to the World Summit for Social Development); and activities in follow-up to Agenda 21 (most notably environmentally sustainable management of natural resources and various sectors of activity, and development of statistics and environmental accounts).

372. The ECLAC secretariat also provided technical assistance, together with the Organization of American States and the Inter-American Development Bank, to member Governments in implementing the decisions taken by 34 heads of State and Government at the Summit of the Americas (Miami, December 1994). The Executive Secretary participated in the Meeting of Heads of State and Government of the Rio Group (Quito, September 1995) and the fifth Ibero-American Conference of Heads of State and Government (Bariloche, Argentina, October 1995).

373. ECLAC has continued to perform its established role of monitoring the economic and social performance of the region. The annual publications that fulfil this function include the *Preliminary Overview of the Economy of Latin America and the Caribbean*, the *Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean*, the *Statistical Yearbook for Latin America and the Caribbean* and the *Social Panorama of Latin America*.

4. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

374. Against the backdrop of profound structural changes involving production, trade, technology, and the social and physical environment in the Asia-Pacific region, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, headed by Adrianus Mooy, has continued to monitor,

review and analyse the economic and social development situation in the region and to disseminate relevant information to policy makers and others. At its fifty-second session, held at Bangkok from 17 to 24 April 1996, ESCAP resolved to further its analytical and technical assistance work in several areas of macroeconomic reform and management and their impact on the domestic and external sectors of the region's economies.

375. In the field of macroeconomic reform and policy management, special emphasis has been placed on the economies in transition and the least developed, land-locked and Pacific island countries. The provision of technical assistance and advisory services has taken the form of national workshops on macroeconomic reforms in the transition economies of the Central Asian republics; the mobilization of private sector financial resources for infrastructure development in Indo-China; assistance to countries such as Uzbekistan and Viet Nam in the formulation of macroeconomic simulation models; enhancing efficiency in external aid utilization in the least developed countries; and enhancing cooperation in trade and investment between Pacific island countries and economies of East and South-East Asia in the 1990s.

376. Technical assistance in the area of international trade and investment has focused primarily on issues relating to the implications of the Uruguay Round agreements for the developing countries; integration of the economies of countries in the region not members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) into the international trading system; intraregional trade and investment; trade facilitation and trade efficiency; promoting a network of trade-related research institutions; and trade promotion activities. Attention was also given to the development of information systems in the region, in particular the development of the computerized Regional Trade Information Network (TISNET); the Micro-computer-based Commodity Information and Analysis System (MICAS); the Regional Investment Information and Promotion Service (RIIPS); and the Bangkok mirror site for Trade Facilitation Information Exchange (TraFIX). The Commission also decided to organize, in collaboration with UNCTAD and UNDP and with the involvement of WTO, a meeting among senior trade policy officials of the region at Jakarta in September 1996 to help in the preparation of the first WTO Ministerial Meeting, to be held in Singapore in December 1996.

377. ESCAP continued to carry out a programme of activities deriving from the Seoul Plan of Action for Promoting Industrial Restructuring in Asia and the Pacific. Progress has been made in the implementation of the Action Programme for Regional Economic Cooperation in Investment-related Technology Transfer. The Commission also endorsed the holding of a meeting of ministers of industry and technology in 1997. The first session of the Subcommittee on Industry and Technology of the Regional Inter-agency Committee was held in July 1996.

378. At its fifty-second session, the Commission had before it a study on rural poverty alleviation and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific, the theme of that session. The linkages between urban poverty and various aspects of the informal sector where most of the urban poor find employment were studied to formulate policy recommendations enhancing the contribution of that sector to poverty alleviation. Activities based on a sister district concept have been initiated to enhance district-level coordination and to improve policy design for the countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. Activities under the UNDP-funded regional transport and communications programme have been reoriented to include pilot projects in rural and urban areas. In addition, Member States analysed the findings of a study on the experiences of selected countries of the region in the successful introduction of science and technology in rural areas and in rural industrialization for the generation of meaningful employment and income and improvement of the quality of life.

379. The Commission undertook follow-up activities to its resolution 51/7 on the Jakarta Declaration and Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women in Asia and the Pacific. Under the Regional Inter-agency Committee, a Subcommittee on the Advancement of Women was established to promote joint activities among United Nations specialized bodies and agencies. At the subregional level, workshops were held on a women's information network in the Central Asian States, and on promoting women's economic participation in Indo-China.

380. In preparation for regional inputs to Habitat II, ESCAP convened the second Asia-Pacific Urban Forum to focus on building new and effective partnerships between government, civic society, the media and the private sector. The proceedings of the Forum were presented at Habitat II. The Commission also expressed concern about the increasingly severe air pollution in the urban centres of the region and the fact that, by 2010, 10 Asian cities would be among the 20 largest cities in the world. It called for the implementation of activities that would lead to the development of integrated policies on urban quality, energy, industry and transport.

381. The Commission initiated various activities in implementation of the Agenda for Action on Social Development in the ESCAP Region. Preliminary actions were also initiated in preparation for the convening of the Fifth Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Social Development, to be held in the Philippines in 1997 to review and assess the progress achieved in implementation of the Agenda for Action as well as the Programme of

Action adopted by the World Summit for Social Development.

382. The Commission undertook a series of follow-up activities to its resolution 48/3 on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002. It continued to provide support to national efforts to meet the targets and recommendations for implementation of the Agenda for Action for the Decade, adopted by the Meeting to Review the Progress of the Decade in June 1995 and endorsed by the Committee on Poverty Alleviation through Economic Growth and Social Development at its second session in September 1995. The thirteenth session of the Subcommittee on Disability-related Concerns of the Regional Inter-agency Committee was held in May 1996.

383. In implementing the Bali Declaration on Population and Sustainable Development and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the first session of the Inter-organization Subcommittee on Population and Development in Asia and the Pacific was organized in November 1995. Activities of the Asia-Pacific Population Information Network (Asia-Pacific POPIN) focused on upgrading members' technical skills in database development, improving population information management and networks, and information dissemination.

384. A major activity under the subprogramme on environment and sustainable development was the organization of the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific in November 1995. The Commission, at its fifty-second session, endorsed the recommendations of the Conference, the Ministerial Declaration and the Regional Action Programme for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development, 1996-2000, calling for their early implementation. The assessment of the state of the environment in Asia and the Pacific was a major accomplishment brought to the attention of the Conference.

385. Studies were conducted on industrial audit for waste minimization, valuation of natural resources, climate change and combating desertification in selected countries. A training seminar on capacity-building in coastal environmental management was organized at Bangkok, with a demonstration on modelling the coastal environment. A regional seminar on identification and assessment of least-cost options for greenhouse gas mitigation was organized together with the Asian Development Bank. Close cooperation was maintained with the Asia-Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists to promote awareness on the environment in the region, as well as with non-governmental organizations, the private sector and other regional bodies and organizations of the United Nations.

386. A regional study on the implications of environmental measures for the relative trade competitiveness of selected environmentally vulnerable, export-oriented sectors in which a considerable share of production is assumed by small and medium-sized enterprises is being prepared by ESCAP. The study is being undertaken in collaboration with UNCTAD and will be reviewed by an expert group meeting in the second half of 1996.

387. In implementation of Agenda 21 on freshwater resources, the Commission organized expert group meetings and produced publications on integrated water resource management and on protection of water resources, water quality and aquatic ecosystems in Asia and the Pacific. One project being implemented aims at promoting women's role in the protection and management of water resources. As a contribution to the ongoing exercise on the global assessment of freshwater resources, ESCAP produced the *Guidebook to Water Resources, Use and Management in Asia and the Pacific*, the first of its kind ever produced for the region, covering 45 countries/areas of Asia and the Pacific. Other projects focused on water pricing policies and sustainable water demand management.

388. The Commission has assigned high priority to the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, which was launched by the Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Development in Asia and the Pacific held in Beijing in 1994. At the operational level, 14 seminars or conferences were organized for more than 500 participants from the member Governments, and two 3-month training workshops have been conducted to benefit 30 participants from 20 countries. Long-term (9 months-1 year) fellowships have been provided to 16 participants from 10 countries.

389. Activities in the area of mineral resources continued to be focused on the assessment of the mineral resource potential. The review of mineral resource potential and policy for development in the Asian least developed countries and Viet Nam, and the two volumes of the ESCAP *Atlas of Mineral Resources* focusing on geology, mineral resources and recent policy developments, were completed and will be published shortly. Another two volumes of the *Atlas*, covering countries with economies in transition, namely Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, are planned for 1996 and 1997, respectively. Additional work on mineral resources has aimed at promoting foreign direct investment in the mining industry and strengthening national capacities for mineral exploration; in this connection, advisory services were provided to several member Governments.

390. In the field of marine affairs, work on non-living resources in the coastal zone continued with the issuance of a publication entitled *Towards Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Asia* as the first volume in a series on the development and management of non-living resources in the coastal zones of the Asia-Pacific region; preparation of a subregional assessment of mineral/petroleum resource potential in the coastal zones of the countries of North-East Asia also continued. The third training seminar on the removal and disposal of obsolete offshore oil and gas production platforms and structures in the continental shelf and the exclusive economic zones of member States in the Asia-Pacific region was held at Bangkok in September 1995.

391. Under the subprogramme on transport and communications, the implementation of the Asian Land Transport Infrastructure Development (ALTID) project, embracing the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway projects, and facilitation of land transport continued to receive strong support from the Commission. Major activities completed by the end of 1995 included a feasibility study on connecting rail networks of China, Mongolia, Kazakstan, the Russian Federation and the Korean peninsula; a study on developing land transport linkages between Kazakstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and seaports of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan and China; a study on the development of an Asian highway network; a study on railway break-of-gauge problems in the region; a study on road safety in the region; a study on the Trans-Asian railway in the Indo-China and Association of South-East Asian Nations subregion (phase II); and a seminar-cum-study tour on management of maintenance of locomotives and rolling stock (Changzhou, September 1995). Studies on land transport corridors between Central Asia and Europe and between Central Asia, China and the Islamic Republic of Iran are well under way, as are studies of other transport issues.

392. Considerable progress has been made in the preparations for the Ministerial Conference on Infrastructure, to be hosted by the Government of India at New Delhi in October 1996, to launch the New Delhi Action Plan on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific and to review phase II (1992-1996) of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific. Annexed to the New Delhi Action Plan is a regional action programme, formulated and refined on several occasions by ESCAP in conjunction with UNCTAD, the International Labour Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the Universal Postal Union, the International Telecommunication Union, the International Maritime Organization and the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity. The Commission endorsed the plan at its fifty-second session. A regional preparatory meeting for the Conference was held at Kuala Lumpur in July 1996.

393. Several meetings were held on the subject of tourism development: the second and third meetings of the Working Group on the Greater Mekong Subregion Tourism Sector (Vientiane, December 1995, and Pattaya, April 1996); a national workshop on integr[illegible]tourism planning (Nauru, October 1995); a national workshop on strategic tourism marketing planning (Marshall Islands, November 1995); and a national workshop on the Japanese travel market (Vientiane, March 1996). In addition, advisory services have been rendered to member Governments and studies published.

394. Operational activities under the statistics subprogramme continued to focus on assisting countries in strengthening and consolidating their national statistical capacity. Advisory services were provided in such fields as national accounts, population censuses and surveys, and data processing. Transfer and exchange of statistical expertise at technical meetings and its dissemination through training courses and workshops continued. Intensive work continued on the establishment of the ESCAP Statistical Information System (ESIS) within the secretariat. A subregional profile for countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation was issued, together with a number of country profiles on women. The Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific has extended technical support and training assistance by means of in-country courses covering analysis and interpretation of census and survey data, design of information services, dissemination of statistics, economic statistics, sample surveys of human development indicators and statistical operations.

395. Under the subprogramme on the least developed, land-locked and island developing countries, assistance includes an ongoing project on the identification of institutional constraints in implementing macroeconomic policies. The project analyses the role of macroeconomic stability, implementation of monetary and fiscal policies, exchange rate management and the coordination of such policies, with the aim of formulating recommendations for improved institutional arrangements. To assist the integration of women in the development process in the least developed countries, a project on improving the access of women to formal credit and financial institutions reviewed the impediments to such access, identified critical features of credit programmes and recommended the implementation of certain policies to extend credit to women.

396. The increase and diversification of trade and investment links, particularly with the Asian economies,

and support for efforts to achieve sustainable development through the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, adopted in Barbados in 1994, were identified during the third session of the Special Body on Pacific Island Developing Countries in 1995 as areas where ESCAP assistance was needed. Initiatives undertaken included a study on Fiji's export potential to Asia and assistance to the Fiji Trade and Investment Board in establishing a research unit, and a two-year project on enhancing cooperation in trade and investment between Pacific island countries and economies of East and South-East Asia in the 1990s.

397. Throughout the period, the ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre has offered advisory as well as technical assistance to Pacific island countries in development programming, central banking, macroeconomic policy formulation, financial systems, trade promotion, development of port infrastructure and macroeconomic management, and has provided short consultancies in response to specific requests.

5. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

398. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, under the direction of Hazem El-Beblawi, continued to concentrate on the effects of the peace process and of global trade liberalization policies on ESCWA countries. Regional repercussions of the newly created World Trade Organization, and energy, water, technology, environment and other economic and social sectors, together with follow-up actions to global conferences, were also among the main ESCWA concerns.

399. Primary issues addressed by ESCWA corresponded to its five thematic subprogrammes: management of natural resources and the environment; improvement of the quality of life; economic development and cooperation; regional development and global changes; and special programmes and issues. A report covering the role, relevance, vision and activities of ESCWA in 1995 was published in June 1996, and it is envisaged that this report will henceforth be published biennially. Activities under the regular programme of work were complemented by advisory services to member States in the fields of agriculture, data processing, energy, environment, industry, national accounts, social development, transport, water resources and WTO/GATT issues.

400. ESCWA activities as a whole continued to benefit from the views and comments of member States. The Consultative Committee at the ambassadorial level held a meeting on 7 April 1996.

401. The coordinating role of ESCWA at the regional level continued and, acting upon the findings of an informal regional coordinating meeting held in April 1995, ESCWA organized two meetings of the Regional Inter-agency Coordinating Group, on 14 October 1995 and on 16 January 1996, establishing for the region an inter-agency coordination mechanism. Information sharing and agreements reached on the creation of specific task forces represent the first tangible results in this area. In November 1995, the ESCWA Statistics Committee, a specialized intergovernmental body, held its first meeting at Amman.

402. Under the subprogramme on natural resources and the environment, ESCWA published one issue of the *Energy Bulletin* and a number of studies: *Analytical Study of Recent Projects on the Development of Oil and Natural Gas in Selected Member Countries (Jordan and Yemen); Assessment of Water Quality in the ESCWA Region; Resource Conservation Policies and Strategies for Agriculture: Case of the Syrian Arab Republic*; and *Promoting Cleaner Production in the Oil, Gas and Related Industries in the ESCWA Region*. In addition, a report was submitted to the Commission on the introduction of appropriate mechanisms to promote regional cooperation in the water sector.

403. Two expert group meetings and two training activities were conducted during the period: expert group meetings on the implications of Agenda 21 for integrated water management in the ESCWA region (Amman, October 1995) and on the establishment of a regional training network in the water sector in the region (Amman, November 1995); a training course on using remote sensing data and GIS techniques in hydrology and hydrogeology (Amman, December 1995); and group training on farm water management (Kafr Al-Shaikh, Egypt, May-June 1996). Two field projects were continued in 1995, the first was an assessment of water resources by using remote sensing techniques, the second a study on shared basalt aquifers in Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic. Both projects are scheduled for completion during the biennium 1996-1997.

404. Activities on social aspects of development were conducted under the subprogramme on improvement of the quality of life, and included a multidisciplinary activity on the issue of poverty eradication that culminated in the following studies: *Poverty in Western Asia: A Social Perspective*; *Women and Poverty in the ESCWA Region: Issues and Concerns*; *Impact of Selected Macroeconomic and Social Policies on Poverty: The Case-Study of Egypt, Jordan and the Republic of Yemen* and *Poverty in Western Asia: Extent and Measures for its Alleviation*. Other studies completed were *The Impact of Population Growth and Urbanization on Food Consumption Patterns in Jordan* and

The Present Status of Agricultural Extension in Yemen and Future Prospects.

405. ESCWA also published the annual *Population Bulletin* (No. 43); the biennial *Demographic and Related Socio-economic Data Sheets*; *Human Development and Socio-cultural Specificity: The Case of the Arab World*; *Social Dimensions of Human Development*; *Changing Values in the Arab Family*; *Regional Perspective of Human Settlements in ESCWA Countries*; *Technological and Social Aspects of Upgrading and Revitalizing Settlements: The Case of the Town of Thula in Yemen*; and two issues of the biannual *Newsletter on Human Settlements in the Arab World*. The proceedings of the expert group meeting in preparation for Habitat II, which was held at Amman in January 1995, were also issued.

406. ESCWA organized an expert group meeting on entrepreneurial and managerial skills under changing conditions (Bahrain, November 1995) and a workshop on monitoring and evaluation of rural development projects (Amman, September 1995).

407. In cooperation with UNDP, ESCWA formulated a project document on preparatory assistance for regional support to national efforts in pursuit of sustainable development; and work was initiated on the project on establishing a training centre for the use of computers for blind girls in Amman, funded by the Arab Gulf Programme for the United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND). In addition, databases were established and maintained on labour force statistics; ESCWA social statistics; human settlements; and gender statistics for the ESCWA member States; Arab women: statistical database, includes a publication with the same title.

408. ESCWA activities under the subprogramme on economic development and cooperation have involved the annual multidisciplinary publication *Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the ESCWA Region*, which received contributions from most sections at ESCWA; a publication, completed in conjunction with the *Survey*, entitled *Stock Markets in the ESCWA Region*; *Analytical Review of Developments and Issues in the External Trade and Payments Situation of Countries of the ESCWA Region*; *Review of Developments and Trends in the Monetary and Financial Sectors in the ESCWA Region*; *Revitalization of Research and Development in the ESCWA Region*; and *Techno-Economic Aspects of the Commercial Application of New Materials Technologies in the ESCWA Member Countries*.

409. Other studies prepared were: *ESCWA Regional Strategy for Multimodal Transport Development*; *Transport Bulletin* (No. 6); *A Port Pricing Model for the ESCWA Region*, which was undertaken in cooperation with ESCAP, with the Jordanian port of Aqaba as a pilot case; *Impact of the Structural Adjustment Programme on Food Production and Consumption in Egypt*; *Agricultural Integration among Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic, Lebanon and Jordan*; and *Review of Recent Development of Manufacturing Activities and Prospects in the ESCWA Region, 1994*. In addition, issue No. 17 of *Agriculture and Development in Western Asia*, on questions relating to policies and planning, current agriculture problems, and food security, was published, as were four statistical series: *Statistical Abstract of the ESCWA Region* (No. 15); *Prices and Financial Indicators in the ESCWA Region* (No. 13); *National Accounts Studies of the ESCWA Region* (No. 15); and *Bulletin of Industrial Statistics for the Arab Countries, 1995* (No. 2).

410. The following meetings and training workshops were conducted: expert group meetings on revitalization of research and development activities in the ESCWA region (Hurghada, Egypt, September 1995) and on techno-economic aspects of the application of new materials technologies in the region (Al Ain, United Arab Emirates, October 1995); regional training of trainers workshops on project planning and environmental considerations (Ankara, September 1995) and on food and agricultural policy analysis (Amman, October 1995); and a training workshop on the analysis and management of the agricultural sector (Al Ain, United Arab Emirates, December 1995). The Second Arab Conference and Expo for Electronics, Software and Communications Industries in the Arab Countries, including an exhibition, was held at Cairo in November 1995, in cooperation with the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and other agencies.

411. Databases on industrial statistics for Arab countries and on transnational corporations were established and maintained; and preparations were carried out for the 1996 meeting on China and the Arab world: enhancement of interregional flows of goods and services, as well as for the publication of country profiles on the flow of goods, services and investment, to be issued in 1996.

412. Under its subprogramme on regional development and global changes, ESCWA dealt with exogenous factors and global changes that affect the region. The following activities were carried out: the multidisciplinary study, *The Impact of the Single European Market on ESCWA Member Countries*, was published in five volumes together with a *Summary and Recommendations* (vol. I: *Foreign Trade*; vol. II: *Agriculture*; vol. III: *Trade in Manufactured Products*; vol. IV: *Banking and Finance*; and vol. V: *Science and Technology*). Other studies published were: *Privatization in the Gulf Countries*; *Privatization in ESCWA Countries with More Diversified Economies*; and *Industrial Strategies and Policies in the ESCWA Region within the Context of Changing International and Regional Environment*.

413. An expert group meeting was held on the subject of industrial strategies and policies in the context of changing international and regional environment (Bahrain, November 1995), which addressed mainly macro-industrial policy issues; and a workshop on the impact of ISO 9000 on the cement industry was held in Abu Dhabi in May 1996.

414. The Middle East peace process, the occupied territories and the least developed countries were among issues addressed under the subprogramme on special programmes and issues, which included the following studies: *Study and Evaluation of Agricultural Credit Institutions in the Palestinian Territories*; *Assessment of the Cropping Pattern in the Gaza Strip and Prospects for Development*; *Investment Environment in the Industrial Sector in Yemen*; and *Farm Data Handbook: Occupied Territories*.

415. The ESCWA secretariat participated in the plenary meeting of the Regional Economic Development Working Group, which was held at Amman on 8 May 1996. Meetings of the Working Group are attended by the countries, from different world regions, that are partners in the Middle East peace process as a follow-up to the Amman Summit held in October 1995. ESCWA was also designated by the Secretary-General as the leading agency to conduct a special technical mission to Lebanon pursuant to General Assembly resolution 50/22 C, to study and prepare a report on the human and material losses and damage resulting from hostilities there (27 May-10 June 1996). In addition, ESCWA participated in the Third United Nations Inter-agency Meeting for the Palestinian Territories, organized by the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories (Gaza, April 1996); and project documents were prepared on the establishment of business incubators in the occupied Palestinian territories, one in the West Bank and one in the Gaza Strip.

D. Operational activities for development

416. Operational activities for development were undertaken by the following programmes, funds and offices of the United Nations: the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund, the World Food Programme, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and the United Nations Office for Project Services. The United Nations Secretariat, with the Department for Development Support and Management Services as its focal point, also undertook technical cooperation programmes. Where possible, these operational activities were pursued as joint undertakings of the various programmes and funds of the Organization and the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions.

1. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

417. The United Nations Development Programme, under its Administrator, James Gustave Speth, is the principal entity within the United Nations for funding and coordination of technical assistance for development. Mr. Speth is also serving as the Secretary-General's Coordinator for Economic and Social Development.

418. UNDP operational objectives for 1996-1997 can be divided into five priority areas. First, UNDP aims to provide support to programme countries in their efforts to achieve sustainable human development and to strengthen country offices and headquarters. The organization is committed to providing about 90 per cent of its core resources to low-income countries where annual per capita incomes are less than $750; 60 per cent of resources go to the least developed countries.

419. The programme approach stresses broad, country-driven initiatives and sector strategies rather than the scattering of UNDP resources into many small projects. UNDP has strengthened its substantive capacities by adding experts to country offices in fields such as HIV/AIDS, economics and sustainable development. There has also been greater decentralization of activities to country offices, where 85 per cent of UNDP staff work. UNDP headquarters has been reorganized to respond more effectively to country needs and priorities and to reinforce synergies between UNDP-associated funds and special programmes (the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the United Nations Volunteers, the United Nations Capital Development Fund, the Office to Combat Desertification and Drought and the Global Environment Facility).

420. A second UNDP priority is to implement the successor programming arrangements approved by the Executive Board in 1995 efficiently and to ensure enhanced delivery. The Board, in its decision 96/7, reaffirmed the country cooperation framework as the central document in the country programming process, the recipient Government having the primary responsibility for the formulation of the framework, in consultation with UNDP.

421. Thirdly, UNDP seeks to play an advocacy role, build constituencies and mobilize resources for sustainable human development. The UNDP-commissioned Human Development Report focuses global policy attention on key areas in development. UNDP has sponsored more than 30

national human development reports, including 22 in the Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States region. The 1996 *Human Development Report*, on the subject of economic growth and inequities among and within countries, was released in July 1996 in Tokyo. Regional and national launches and workshops took place in many other cities worldwide. UNDP supports resource mobilization for countries, including those in crisis, by means of round-table meetings (see para. 429 below). UNDP has also moved to strengthen involvement with non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations of all types.

422. The fourth and fifth goals are to strengthen UNDP partnerships in the United Nations system and to enhance UNDP performance in countries in crisis and other special circumstances. UNDP has played a major role in two new United Nations system-wide programmes: the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, launched in March 1996, and the United Nations system-wide action plan for integrated follow-up to United Nations conferences, both of which are implemented under the umbrella of the Administrative Committee on Coordination. Both initiatives involve activities that seek concrete results in a set time-frame and have immediate relevance at the country level.

423. Managing and supporting the resident coordinator system is another leading concern. As at December 1995, 45 resident coordinators came directly from or had worked for an agency other than UNDP. Resident coordinator and resident representative assignment exercises have been made more rigorous, with clearer definition of country-by-country needs. Simultaneously, through the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions and the Administrative Committee on Coordination, the specialized agencies have recognized and strengthened the role of the system's resident coordinators and UNDP has created a special office at headquarters to provide support to the resident coordinators. For the first time, programme funding is available specifically to support the functions of the resident coordinators. Joint mid-career training programmes for resident coordinators and country representatives of United Nations organizations have also been established.

424. UNDP has become a development partner of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other United Nations bodies whose job it is to care for refugees, the internally displaced and other crisis victims. A substantial portion of UNDP programme resources has been reserved for reconstruction, reintegration and reconciliation initiatives in countries in crisis and other special situations under the new programming arrangements. Major initiatives have been undertaken or are under way in Angola, Burundi, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Gaza and the West Bank, Liberia, Mozambique, Rwanda and Sierra Leone and in Central America.

425. In its support for African development, UNDP helps countries in the region to define their development goals, strategies and policies and to find resources to attain them. It is hoped that the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, which is coordinated by the UNDP Administrator and the Executive Secretary of ECA, will implement the objectives of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. Ongoing activities in the region include capacity-building for economic management, grass-roots initiative support, training of government officials, and support of the African Capacity-building Initiative, the National Long-term Perspective Studies programme, and the national technical cooperation assessment and programmes (NATCAP) exercise.

426. In the area of governance, UNDP chairs the Civil Service Reform Working Group in the context of the World Bank-led Special Programme of Assistance to Africa. In 1995, UNDP coordinated the preparation of the Guiding Principles on Civil Service Reform in Africa, intended to create donor support for civil service reform in the region. UNDP has provided assistance in the various stages of the electoral process in over 30 countries in Africa.

427. The Regional Bureau for Africa sponsored the participation of policy makers, non-governmental organizations and women's groups in the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in September 1995. Technical support and resources were provided for the preparation of national reports in over 25 countries, which provided the impetus for a publication on trends in the status of women in Africa. Workshops were organized in 18 countries to sensitize planners, policy makers and other groups to the concept of gender in development, and to give greater national focus to issues of gender. In collaboration with UNIFEM, UNDP launched a programme called "Strengthening gender and development capacity in Africa", designed to develop an integrated strategy for mainstreaming gender in African development planning and programming. In collaboration with other regional bureaux, UNDP held two workshops on women-in-conflict situations and another on the leadership role of women in Africa, which brought together the experiences of women from Kenya, Mali, Senegal, South Africa and Uganda. A gender and development information network directory, to be linked with the Internet, was issued as a result.

428. UNDP renewed its emphasis on private-sector initiatives in Africa, with a focus on small and medium-sized enterprise development. Sensitization meetings with African entrepreneurs were held, as were two regional

forums, in Botswana and Cameroon, which led to subregional initiatives in East and West Africa. The Regional Bureau for Africa initiated action to regionalize the UNDP-funded EMPRETEC entrepreneurship programme in Africa, begun in Latin America, so as to enhance inter-country networking.

429. Round-table meetings were organized by UNDP in 1995 for Angola, Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Lesotho, Namibia, Rwanda and Seychelles, and sectoral round-table meetings were convened in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Mali and the Niger. The meetings for Angola and Namibia included private sector and non-governmental organization participation, departure from the practice of restricting participation to the Government and donors only. In Mozambique, at the request of the Government and some bilateral donors, UNDP established a new pooling arrangement format for multi-donor collaboration to increase the harmonization of donor procedures and to make possible the untying of aid and the concentration of activities within the framework of UNDP projects. More than $617 million was pledged for Rwanda's development at a donor round-table meeting held at Geneva in June 1996.

430. In the Asia and Pacific region, UNDP participated in poverty eradication initiatives in a number of countries, including Indonesia, Mongolia, Thailand and Viet Nam. The reformulation of UNDP support to the Cambodian Resettlement and Reintegration Programme (CARERE) culminated in the approval in November 1995 of the four-year, $40 million Cambodian Area Rehabilitation and Regeneration project (CARERE II). Support provided by the Joint Consultative Group on Policy to the poverty alleviation programme in south-west China, a rural credit initiative managed by the UNDP office in Beijing, resulted in $500,000 mobilized from the International Fund for Agricultural Development in parallel funding. Early in 1996, UNDP drew up an operational strategy for Afghanistan, which focuses on community-based poverty eradication under the themes of human rights, social recovery and rural and urban recovery.

431. In the area of the environment, UNDP was a co-sponsor of the first region-wide ministerial follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Bangkok in November 1995. UNDP is working with the Government of Bhutan to prepare a national biodiversity conservation plan. The tripartite review of the regional Global Environmental Facility project on the prevention and management of marine pollution in East Asian seas was held at the end of 1995. More sites may be established in 1996. Other activities in this field were conducted in India, with grant assistance provided by UNDP of $1.7 million from the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol for the phasing out of chlorofluorocarbons; a national strategy on sustainable development in the Islamic Republic of Iran; and a review of the South Pacific Biodiversity Programme of the Global Environment Facility in May 1995.

432. A review of institutional capabilities of the Government of Bangladesh to mainstream gender issues in development planning and programming will be completed in 1996. New gender mainstreaming activities were undertaken in India, Maldives, Myanmar and Samoa during 1996.

433. Three historic agreements concerning the Tumen River Economic Development Area were signed on 6 December 1995 at United Nations Headquarters, marking the culmination of three years of talks facilitated by UNDP. Two agreements established the first intergovernmental organizations for development in north East Asia, and the third established an institution for environmental cooperation.

434. With regard to the Arab States, major activities have been carried out in operationalizing sustainable human development programmes in Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia. A first sustainable human development workshop was held in Lebanon in October 1995. Morocco and Tunisia are pilot countries in the sustainable development networking programme. The Mediterranean environment technical assistance programme is an example of an important regional programming exercise focused on capacity-building and investment preparation projects, with an investment value of $80 million.

435. Community-based programmes in Somalia continued under uncertain political conditions. Area development schemes, highlighted by UNDP at the World Summit for Social Development as a key example of poverty eradication, remained the principal development effort of the country programme in the Sudan. UNDP continued to extend support to the Government of Lebanon for its national programme for the reintegration and rehabilitation of displaced populations. The $1 million UNDP programme provides a mechanism for facilitating the reintegration of the estimated 450,000 displaced persons, and supports local communities with regard to their basic health and education needs, construction of low-cost housing and training for income-generation projects.

436. During 1995, UNDP strengthened its role in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States by approving 12 country programmes. Despite substantially lower human and financial resources for this region than for others, UNDP launched new initiatives in management capacity-building, in new modalities of development cooperation, in strengthening the democratization process and in regional cooperation and security. For example, in June 1995, the

first Central Asian conference on regional cooperation was held in Kyrgyzstan, and in September UNDP organized the Nukus Conference on the Sustainable Development of the Aral Sea Basin States. Consultative group meetings were also held for Azerbaijan, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

437. In December, a UNDP mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina drew up the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement, signed as a precondition for the opening of a UNDP office in that country. In January 1996, the Executive Board recommended that at least $5 million be programmed to Bosnia and Herzegovina in UNDP assistance.

438. Participation by representatives of the region in the Fourth World Conference on Women was supported by UNDP, which also organized the Beijing Express, a train from Warsaw to Beijing that enabled 200 persons from the region to attend the Beijing Conference and receive training in various activities along the way.

439. UNDP involvement in Latin America and the Caribbean included participation in United Nations-assisted peace processes in El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti and Nicaragua, in particular in helping to build institutions fundamental to a democratic society, in coordination with the various development partners. The Government of Spain, with a contribution of $11 million, and UNDP established a trust fund for the promotion of peace in Central America. A conference on governance and development, held at Santiago in September 1995, was supported by UNDP.

440. Several major projects, in Brazil, Guatemala and Mexico, concentrated on the environment. During 1995, the first year of its operational phase, the Global Environment Facility approved 11 UNDP projects in Latin America and the Caribbean, for a total of $15.35 million. Five of those projects concentrate on helping countries to fulfil their commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. A project in Amazonia promotes dialogue between members of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty for the sustainable use of forest habitat and resources.

441. In addition to its numerous regional undertakings, UNDP is involved in various global and interregional initiatives. Through its HIV and Development Programme, UNDP is one of the co-sponsors of the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. In Uganda, for example, by the end of 1995 the UNDP-supported programme had funded a total of 116 micro-projects in 20 districts and school fees for some 3,500 orphans. UNDP is also involved in the Republic of Korea-based International Vaccine Institute, the UNDP-World Bank Water and Sanitation Programme, capacity-building for sustainable water development, sustainable food production, global technology, training on climate change, aquaculture, and private sector development. An appeal launched by UNDP and the International Olympic Committee at the 1996 Olympic Games helped to mobilize international support for anti-poverty initiatives in relation to the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty (1996).

442. The United Nations Capital Development Fund targets poverty reduction in the least developed countries. In 1995, new programmes were elaborated in Cambodia and Togo and eight evaluations of Fund projects were undertaken. At the annual session of the Executive Board in May 1996, eight donors announced their intention to support the Fund with predictable funding levels for three years. The United Nations Revolving Fund for Natural Resources Exploration has been revitalized with the help of the Government of Japan.

443. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) played a major role during and in preparation for the Fourth World Conference on Women and its parallel Non-Governmental Organization Forum. The Fund supported over 120 activities related to the Conference, including assistance to grass-roots women's organizations, publications on UNIFEM best practices and lessons learned, funding participants to attend the Forum, organizing seminars on how to participate in world conferences, and strengthening the UNIFEM media advocacy campaign.

444. UNDP played an important role in the preparation of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) at both the national and international levels. A new global facility to promote urban agriculture was launched in July 1996 with funding from UNDP, the International Development Research Centre and the Netherlands; it will offer technical assistance and information on urban agriculture to non-governmental organizations, community groups, the private sector and other users. Another new facility, to promote private investment in urban areas, was launched at Habitat II with the aim of generating $1 billion in investments in water, energy and waste management.

445. During 1995, a total of 3,263 United Nations Volunteer (UNV) specialists and field workers, from 134 countries, served in 139 countries. Programme areas that assumed a greater profile in 1995 were poverty eradication, support for peace-building and democratization processes, assistance to countries in transition, and the strengthening of civil society. United Nations Volunteer specialists served in 1995 in Guatemala, Haiti and Rwanda in United Nations peace-keeping and human rights operations. United Nations Volunteers supported the Middle East peace process

through the UNV-managed Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) modality and the programme of assistance to the Palestinian people. The "White Helmets" initiative, which was launched by the President of Argentina in 1993 and became operational in 1995, aims at making volunteer teams available on a standby basis through national volunteer corps. The United Nations Short-term Advisory Resources programme, the private sector development arm of UNV, has increasingly focused its attention on countries in transition, completing 124 assignments in 18 countries in 1995. In June 1996, the headquarters of the UNV programme was moved from Geneva to Bonn. In May 1996, the programme celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary at the annual session of the Executive Board.

446. The Office to Combat Desertification and Drought supports 43 programme countries in preparing for implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa. The Global Environment Facility works in climate change, biological diversity, international waters and ozone-layer depletion. All 55 UNDP pilot phase projects authorized between 1991 and 1994 by the participants in the Facility, totalling $242.5 million, were approved by September 1995, and 53 of them are being implemented. Through the Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol, UNDP provided $32.4 million in 1995 to assist 41 countries in eliminating ozone-depleting substances. In 1996, an additional $16.5 million for 47 new projects in 15 countries was approved. The CAPACITY 21 fund, which helps countries to build capacity to integrate the principles of Agenda 21 into national development planning, had programmes in 44 countries during 1995; by the end of that year, the fund had received pledges totalling $51.7 million.

447. The General Assembly endorsed a strategy for new directions in technical cooperation among developing countries in its resolution 50/119. The activities of the UNDP Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries correspond to the four focus areas of UNDP in four subprogrammes: sensitization and information on technical cooperation among developing countries; capacities and needs-matching exercises and subject-specific workshops; studies and evaluation; and enhancement of capacities for the application of technical cooperation among developing countries. The Administrator signed an agreement in April 1996 formally creating a new trust fund to promote economic and technical cooperation among developing countries.

448. The programme of assistance to the Palestinian people was enlarged in 1995 in direct response to the continuing historic peace process between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. In close collaboration with the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories, UNDP had developed financial mechanisms that are available to donors to facilitate the social and economic development on which peace and stability depend. During 1995, the programme undertook to formulate, within its overall objectives, a comprehensive strategic framework to guide its activities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip over a three-year period. A key area is employment generation, an ongoing programme which has generated some 75,000 working day opportunities in the Gaza Strip. Total expenditures in 1995 were approximately $34 million, an increase of more than 50 per cent over 1994.

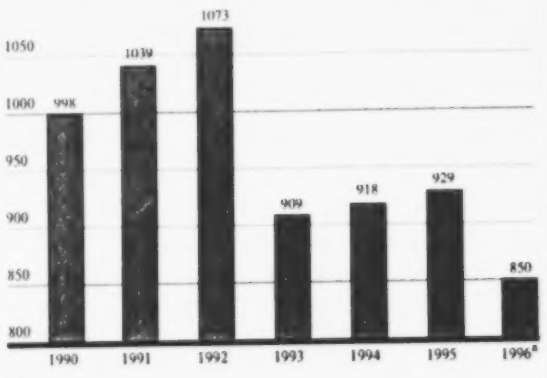
449. UNDP assisted Bangladesh, Guyana, Mongolia, Montserrat and Yemen following natural disasters in mid-1996. Disaster preparedness capabilities in Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Mongolia were boosted through a new programme supported by UNDP, helping countries to meet the goals of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. UNDP also sponsored the participation of 40 government officials and national staff from all regions in an international conference on emergency settlements and response in May 1996.

450. UNDP has continued to initiate reforms intended to improve the efficiency and quality of its services. Early in 1995, the Programme adopted a strategic framework that consolidates its new mission, goals and strategies in a single policy document. The 1996-1997 plan, which contains a situational analysis of UNDP progress under the 1995 plan, was published in May 1996. A new human resources management strategy was approved by senior management in late 1995, emphasizing staff development activities, career advisory services, and initiatives to advance women. In addition, programming cycles have been harmonized with other United Nations funds and programmes in 27 countries, and substantial progress has been made in 55 others. A structured approach to managing the process of change at UNDP was introduced by the Administrator in May 1996. A change management committee and Project UNDP 2001, which report to the Executive Board of UNDP, were created to define the overall change process, together with specific target projects.

451. Over the six-year period from 1992 to 1997, UNDP will have reduced its administrative budget in real terms by 12 per cent, its regular staff at headquarters by 31 per cent and its total regular staff by 15 per cent. Other measures taken with regard to internal accountability include the independent auditing by international accounting firms of UNDP country offices in Asia and Africa; the institution of transparent, peer-review procedures for staff evaluations and in hiring, promotion and assignment decisions; and

Figure 11
Voluntary contributions to the United Nations Development Programme (core), 1990-1996

Millions of United States dollars



[a]Expected.

targets for promoting gender equality within UNDP. In the area of evaluation, UNDP has become the largest contributor to the evaluation database of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), with more than 1,200 project and programme evaluations.

452. The total resources of UNDP for its fifth programming cycle (1992-1996) are estimated at $8.2 billion, significantly above the original and revised earmarking of about $7.5 billion. This reflects a significant increase in cost-sharing and trust funds to a level of about $3.2 billion. Contributions to UNDP core resources are estimated at $4.7 billion, still much lower than the originally projected level of $6.3 billion, which was foreseen under Governing Council decision 90/34, in which the Council called for an 8 per cent annual increase during the fifth programming cycle. Miscellaneous income is estimated at $0.2 billion. In addition, it is estimated that the funds administered by UNDP (the United Nations Capital Development Fund, UNIFEM, UNV, the United Nations Fund for Science and Technology for Development, the United Nations Revolving Fund for Natural Resources Exploration, the Office to Combat Desertification and Drought and the Energy Account) will receive a total of $374 million in core and earmarked funding during the fifth cycle.

453. In 1995, voluntary contributions by Member States to UNDP core resources amounted to $928.6 million (see fig. 11). Contributions to non-core resources, including UNDP-administered funds, trust funds, cost-sharing arrangements and government cash counterpart contributions, raised the total funds administered by UNDP to over $1.8 billion (see fig. 12). Cost-sharing arrangements alone amounted to $600.97 million in 1995 (see fig. 13). Total field programme expenditures for technical cooperation activities in 1995 amounted to approximately $1,014.2 million. Voluntary contributions to UNDP core resources for 1996 are estimated at $850 million.

454. Of the members of the OECD/DAC donor countries that have made pledges for 1996, Japan and the Netherlands have announced increases in their contributions, while Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland have maintained their 1996 contributions at the level of the previous year. New Zealand and Portugal made substantial increases in their contributions, while the contribution from the United States of America was lower than in 1995.

455. Also of note is the increase in contributions for 1996 of several programme countries, including Benin, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Honduras, India, Mauritania, Namibia, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Turkey and Viet Nam. A number of programme countries, some of which are experiencing severe economic problems, have resumed their support to UNDP; they include Djibouti, Kenya, Nicaragua, the Niger, the Sudan, Ukraine, Yemen and Zambia. Andorra and Slovenia made pledges to UNDP for the first time in 1995.

Figure 12
Summary of financial activities: funds and trust funds administered by the United Nations Development Programme, 1990-1995

Millions of United States dollars

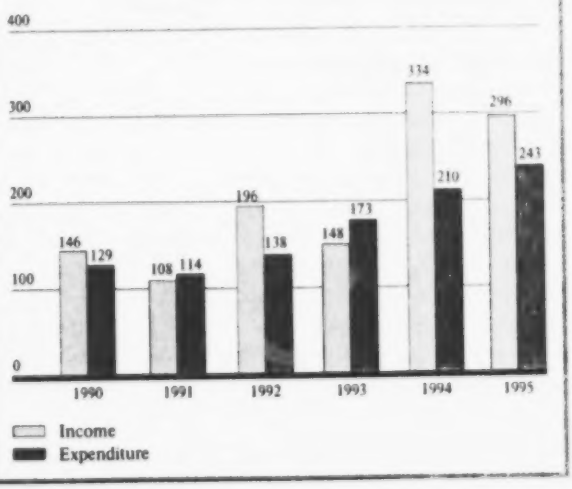
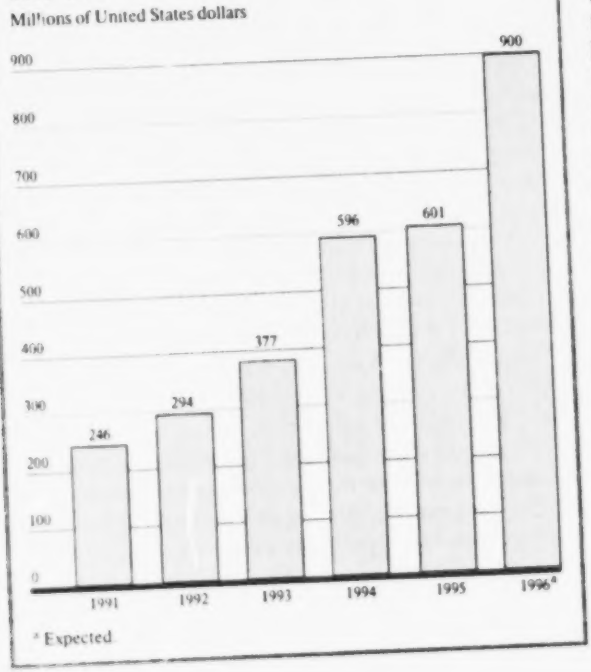


Figure 13
Cost-sharing income of the United Nations Development Programme, 1991-1996



2. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

456. The United Nations Children's Fund commemorates its fiftieth anniversary in 1996, a celebration for the Fund and a celebration of the fact that the past 50 years have witnessed more progress for the well-being of children than all previous history. When UNICEF was created in 1946, mass deaths of children were still considered an inevitable fact of life in extensive parts of the world. Today, this sense of inevitability has been largely dispelled and the global child death rate has fallen by half. In just one decade, from the early 1980s to the 1990s, worldwide immunization coverage against the six main killer diseases of childhood increased from 10 per cent to over 80 per cent, saving millions of young lives. Great strides have now been made towards fulfilling the goals set out at the 1990 World Summit for Children, the first-ever global summit. As we approach the twenty-first century, children occupy a prominent place on international and national human rights and development agendas.

457. Under the leadership of the Executive Director, Carol Bellamy, UNICEF is now moving to meet the tremendous challenges that still confront children and families in accordance with the goals of the Summit and the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

458. The UNICEF medium-term plan for the period 1996-1999, approved by the Executive Board in June 1996 as a flexible framework for action, calls for a forward-looking commitment on the part of UNICEF to help States apply the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, now subscribed to almost universally. Programme strategies were reviewed by the Executive Board in 1995-1996 in the areas of education, health, water and environmental sanitation, and emergency services. The reviews, directed at developing the focus of programme activities to the year 2000, drew on the experiences of recent years in promoting the end-decade goals of the Summit, the strategy discussion in the Executive Board prompted by the 1992 multi-donor evaluation of UNICEF, and the beginning of the process of using the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a framework for UNICEF programmes.

459. The results of political commitments made at the World Summit for Children to give children a better future are more and more visible, despite civil conflicts and man-made and natural disasters in many countries. By the end of 1995, some 150 developing countries had prepared national programmes of action, or were at an advanced stage of doing so, to achieve the key goals for health, nutrition, education, water and sanitation set out in the Declaration adopted at the Summit. Special actions had been identified for girls to help offset gender bias.

460. In 1995, UNICEF had programmes of cooperation in 149 countries: 46 in Africa, 37 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 34 in Asia and the Pacific, 14 in the Middle East and North Africa and 18 in Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States. Some 75 per cent of programme expenditures were in low-income countries, and 36 per cent were in Africa, some $292 million out of $804 million. The fourth issue of *The Progress of Nations*, recording the advances and setbacks for children throughout the world, confirmed the trend of Governments giving a high priority to tracking progress for children and provided up-to-date data on indicators for monitoring progress towards the goals of the Summit, ranking countries on the basis of their achievements.

461. Morbidity and mortality prevention remain at the top of UNICEF priorities, including immunization and the prevention and treatment of major communicable diseases such as malaria, diarrhoea, pneumonia and measles. Immunization rates were sustained globally at average rates of some 80 per cent or higher, but the regional average in Africa remained unacceptably low, with a rate of only 41 per cent in West and Central Africa. Global efforts to

eradicate polio continued, 145 out of 213 countries reporting no cases in 1993. Dracunculiasis has been reduced by 95 per cent over the last decade, and guinea worm disease is now endemic in only 16 countries of Africa, in Yemen and in small parts of India.

462. UNICEF policies and strategies in women's health were revised in 1995 to take into account evolving current international knowledge on maternal health care and programme experiences. Support focused on the reduction of maternal mortality, primarily through access to quality prenatal, delivery and post-natal care. UNICEF refocused its efforts on strengthening the role of professional midwives and enhanced its development of health promotion messages on a range of women's issues such as family planning, breast-feeding, violence and female mutilation. The UNICEF health strategy now recognizes the health of young people as an issue of child rights and addresses adolescent health problems more centrally.

463. The HIV/AIDS pandemic continued to spread and has reversed the downward trends in infant and child mortality rates in several countries. UNICEF worked as a partner in the newly established Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS through key programmes in sexual and reproductive health, youth health, school health and communication.

464. The reduction of child malnutrition remained a key issue in many UNICEF country programmes, and preparations were intensified for the 1996 World Food Summit. Global progress was made towards the goal of universal salt iodization, and projects were launched in 14 countries to bring about innovations in the distribution of vitamin A supplements and the monitoring of improvements in mortality and morbidity. UNICEF joined with other agencies in exploring ways of increasing the micronutrient content of foods. In 1995, there were 4,000 baby-friendly hospitals in 170 countries.

465. Most countries in Latin America, the Middle East and East Asia had met the mid-decade goals of advancing towards universal primary education and reducing gender disparities. In Africa, however, progress has been uneven and in many cases there has been a regression. The year 1995 was the year of girls' education, as the education of girls was recognized as the centrepiece for sustainable development, demographic balance and women's empowerment. The primary education of girls was the dominant component of UNICEF support for education in South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa. Together with UNESCO, UNDP and the World Bank, UNICEF co-hosted a meeting at Amman in June 1996 to assess progress made following the World Conference on Education for All, held at Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990.

466. UNICEF devotes almost 40 per cent of its human resources to sub-Saharan Africa. It is now focusing on further development and implementation of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, programme lessons learned from experience, the widespread dissemination of "best practices", the special characteristics of child rights issues in Africa and a resource mobilization strategy. There have been some positive developments: increased political stability in some countries; half of the sub-Saharan countries close to achieving the 80 per cent immunization level target; significant progress towards eliminating guinea worm disease; control of iodine deficiency disorders, 80 per cent of African countries having adopted, or being about to adopt, legislation for the iodization of salt; and higher than expected use rates of oral rehydration therapy in a number of countries. Nevertheless, sub-Saharan Africa still presents a largely bleak scenario, with low or negative economic growth rates, continuing complex emergencies and fragmenting countries and societies.

467. Concern for children in especially difficult circumstances is being further integrated into mainstream UNICEF programmes. Among the priority child protection issues are child labour, children affected by armed conflict, sexual exploitation of children, childhood disability, children and families affected by AIDS, and street children. In 1995, UNICEF assisted in 21 major complex emergencies to meet the special protection needs of acutely vulnerable children and women, including unaccompanied children, the internally displaced, child combatants and abused children and women. Fully 25 per cent of programme expenditures went to providing life-saving essential services for children and women in emergency situations. Africa remained the continent of greatest need.

468. To meet the psychosocial needs of affected children, UNICEF assisted 16 countries in counselling systems and the creation of the necessary family and community environment for recovery. In nutrition, UNICEF provided supplementary feeding in Afghanistan, Burundi, Rwanda and Sierra Leone. In Rwanda, UNICEF repaired health facilities and achieved pre-war levels of immunization. In Burundi, there was major support for a new programme to fight acute respiratory infections and diarrhoeal diseases. There were mass immunization campaigns in Afghanistan and Angola. Primary health care was a major focus in Liberia and the former Yugoslavia. UNICEF provided water and sanitation facilities in Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, Rwanda and Sierra Leone. Education programmes were provided in Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Rwanda and Sierra Leone.

469. The UNICEF Office of Emergency Programmes took major steps to enhance its emergency responsiveness

capacity, including a review of lessons learned, developing a "service package" approach, setting up rapid response teams, developing memoranda of understanding with other United Nations partners, including UNHCR and WFP, expanding cooperative arrangements with non-governmental organizations, training over 300 staff in emergency management, increasing and improving procurement capacity and improving internal security and communications systems. UNICEF continued its close working relationships with other United Nations bodies, particularly the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, UNHCR, WFP and UNDP.

470. The Convention on the Rights of the Child has been embraced by more States parties than any other human rights treaty in history. There are now 187 ratifying States; two have signed but not ratified and four have not signed. UNICEF is providing technical assistance to numerous countries as they harmonize their national laws with the Convention and has supported training of judges and other juvenile justice workers. UNICEF has supported the Committee on the Rights of the Child, which by the end of 1995 had reviewed the reports of 43 Governments.

471. UNICEF continues to advocate the establishment of monitoring and coordinating mechanisms to oversee the implementation of the Convention. With the support of UNICEF, some countries have created units or systems to collect data regularly to improve monitoring of the situation of children and to develop indicators to measure progress in achieving improvements. UNICEF organized the fourth annual informal field visit of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in October: the Committee members visited South Asia and met with government counterparts, non-governmental organizations and other partners.

472. Within UNICEF, work is under way to adopt a rights-based approach to programme and advocacy activities. Programme guidelines are being revised so that country programmes can utilize the Convention as their framework. A cross-divisional Steering Committee was established at UNICEF headquarters to formulate strategies on emerging child rights issues. One of the first tasks completed was the development of a procurement policy for UNICEF that was consistent with the Convention; this policy is now in effect. A task force is now formulating and coordinating a UNICEF position on child labour and, to this end, has met with counterparts in the International Labour Organization. UNICEF undertook training of its own staff to ensure that the Convention is effectively reflected in programmes and priorities.

473. UNICEF carried out a wide variety of advocacy activities, such as conferences, seminars, training workshops and symposia, designed to raise awareness and respect for child rights throughout the world, and reached out to the mass media for their support in the promotion of children's rights. The European Parliament approved a European Strategy for Children at a meeting with UNICEF in November 1995, and subsequently adopted it in January 1996. UNICEF supported the process of adoption by the General Assembly of two resolutions on the promotion and protection of children's rights. It continues to support the comprehensive study of the impact of armed conflict on children being undertaken by Graça Machel and the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/157.

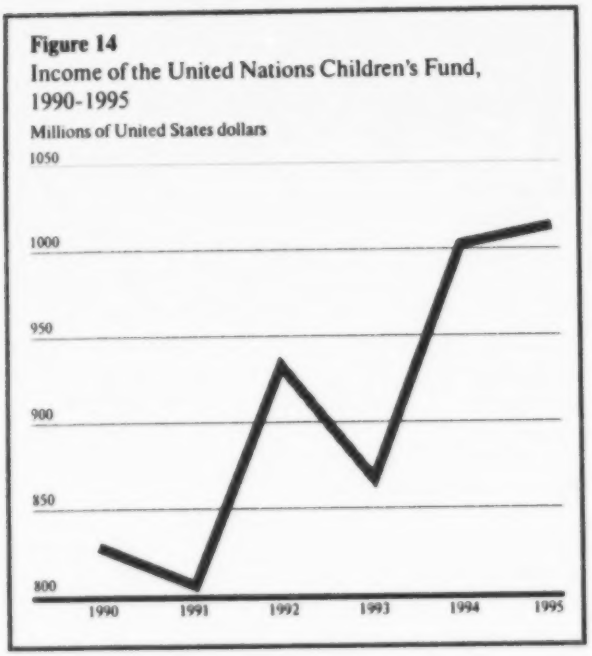
474. The UNICEF Executive Board adopted a mission statement at the beginning of 1996, the result of a broad participatory process involving staff, Governments and national committees. On 30 January 1996, UNICEF formalized its Guiding Principles for Staff Commitments and Conduct. Together, these texts constitute the foundation for the various activities being undertaken to strengthen management systems, enhance the effectiveness of work processes, and define standards for monitoring work performance throughout the organization.

475. A Steering Committee, a Management Task Force, advisory councils and eight management excellence project teams worked towards the strengthening of UNICEF management, under the guidance and with the support of the UNICEF Executive Board. The aim is to build and maintain high levels of public trust, with a focus on results, value for money, and transparency of decision-making.

476. UNICEF joined with other partners in the Administrative Committee on Coordination to establish three inter-agency task forces to coordinate system-wide action on the priority goals and objectives emerging from the recent round of international conferences. UNICEF then served as an active member of those task forces, following up on the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women. In addition, UNICEF served as a member of the more recently established Inter-agency Committee on Women, implementing the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women. UNICEF was an active participant in the preparations for Habitat II and at the Conference itself and in the preparations for the World Food Summit.

477. UNICEF derives its income from voluntary contributions from governmental and non-governmental sources. Total income for 1995 was $1,011 million, a slight increase from the $1,006 million of 1994 (see fig. 14). Governmental income was 65 per cent of the total, some $661 million, while non-governmental income provided the remaining $350 million. Of the latter, $301 million or 30 per cent of total UNICEF income came from UNICEF national committees. UNICEF expenditures in 1995

Figure 14
Income of the United Nations Children's Fund, 1990-1995



amounted to $1,023 million, of which $804 million was for direct programme assistance. UNICEF received a further $105 million for special accounts, mainly to cover the cost of goods and services purchased and delivered by UNICEF on behalf of Governments or other external organizations. The total amount of funds received by UNICEF for programmes and delivery of goods and services was $1,116 million.

3. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

478. For the United Nations Population Fund, the period under review was one of change and transition during which the Fund worked to meet the challenges and opportunities identified by the International Conference on Population and Development held at Cairo in 1994. Under the direction of Nafis Sadik, UNFPA redefined its programme directions and resource allocation system, its policy guidelines and programming procedures, and a number of financial and managerial processes to take into account the new priorities resulting from the Conference. Working in close cooperation with all countries, the United Nations system and members of civil society, UNFPA moved to implement the recommendations outlined in the Programme of Action of the Cairo Conference. In 1995, UNFPA provided support to 150 countries: 45 in Africa, 34 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 42 in Asia and the Pacific and 29 in the Arab States and Europe.

479. The steps taken by UNFPA to implement the commitments and policies agreed to at the World Summit for Social Development held at Copenhagen and the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing should be seen in the context of its mandate and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. The Beijing Platform for Action, in particular, reinforces key concepts and goals agreed to at the Cairo Conference, and advances several critical areas of concern, including a commitment to sexual and reproductive rights as human rights, gender equality, equity and the empowerment of women, male responsibility, and the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls.

480. To help meet those goals, the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board, in its decision 95/15, endorsed three new core programme areas for UNFPA: reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health; population and development strategies; and advocacy. The selection of these three core areas enables UNFPA to sharpen the strategic focus of its programming and capitalize on its comparative advantage and experience in the field of population and development. It also allows the Fund to pursue a holistic approach in addressing the specific population needs of individual countries.

481. During the year, the Fund undertook a number of initiatives to expand the level of its involvement in reproductive health issues. They include increasing access to family-planning information and services; preventing and treating reproductive tract infections, including sexually transmitted diseases; providing routine screening for other reproductive health conditions; preventing HIV/AIDS; preventing and providing appropriate treatment of infertility; preventing abortion; and discouraging harmful practices such as female genital mutilation. These initiatives manifested themselves in a number of ways: in seminars and international meetings, in a series of technical reports addressing themes of the Cairo Conference, in revised programming guidelines, in surveys, and in training field staff to put the new guidelines into operation.

482. Acting upon recommendations made at the Cairo and Beijing conferences, UNFPA began to elaborate the ways in which men's responsibilities in the area of reproductive health could be fostered by the Fund. One result was a study published in November 1995 (technical report 28: "Male involvement in reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health"), whose findings were incorporated into new guidelines for all field staff working in programme areas.

483. UNFPA organized or participated in a number of meetings and consultations, including a UNFPA-sponsored Symposium on Internal Migration and Urbanization in

Developing Countries: Implications for Habitat II (January 1996) and a Consultative Expert Meeting on the Application of Rapid Assessment Procedures in Population Programmes (December 1995). The Fund also prepared numerous position and technical papers on such topics as poverty and UNFPA resource allocations, the relationship between mortality and fertility levels in sub-Saharan Africa, and the contribution of family-planning programmes to fertility declines in the region. In addition, the Fund continued work on a project monitoring key indicators of family-planning and reproductive health programmes; tested a data collection instrument in Honduras, India and Nepal, and monitored the implementation of a project on determinants of success in family-planning programmes executed by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

484. In the area of advocacy, UNFPA worked to convey a clear understanding of the messages and themes of the International Conference on Population and Development so as to mobilize the political support and financial resources needed for the realization of the Conference goals. UNFPA was also an advocate for human rights, including women's rights, and development issues such as education, poverty eradication, basic health services, empowerment of women and people's participation.

485. UNFPA published a range of products in a variety of media, including a new series of posters on Cairo Conference themes. Public service announcements were broadcast on national and international television networks around the world. The Fund also published its annual *State of World Population* report, which focused on current trends in urbanization and population distribution and their link to human settlements issues, and served as a major contribution to Habitat II. UNFPA also published its annual *AIDS Update*, which highlights assistance provided by UNFPA for HIV/AIDS prevention and control activities undertaken in line with national AIDS policies and programmes and within the global strategy of the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.

486. Information efforts also focused on education. UNFPA funded the development of new and relevant curricula and the introduction of participatory teaching methods in school systems in 79 countries. The materials sought to help form attitudes promoting choice, the value of the girl child, responsible sexual behaviour and environmental stewardship.

487. In the area of institutional strengthening, UNFPA continued to enhance the substantive, managerial and operational skills of its staff at headquarters and in the field through training and the increased use of information technology. Activities focused on enabling country office staff to handle the greater responsibilities associated with more decentralized approval authority. In addition, special training workshops were held for country office staff in financial management, procurement and personnel management, as well as in advocacy, including country-specific strategies related to the Cairo Conference, and the integration of gender concerns into the programming process.

488. The General Assembly, by its decision 50/438, endorsed the agreement between UNDP and UNFPA to change the designation of UNFPA resident country directors to UNFPA representatives. This change increases the authority, effectiveness and visibility of UNFPA at the country level and helps strengthen collaboration and complementarity among United Nations agencies in supporting government efforts to implement the Programme of Action of the Cairo Conference. It also enables UNFPA representatives, in residence in some 66 countries, to function more effectively as part of the United Nations resident coordinator system, thereby enhancing the system's coherence and effectiveness in operational activities.

489. To help match UNFPA programme priorities with its financial resources, the Executive Board of UNFPA, in its decision 96/15, approved a new approach for resource allocation based on the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action. The approach is based on a country's level of achievement of the goals of the Cairo Conference and recognizes that there is a continuum of needs, from countries that have made little progress towards achieving those goals to countries that have already reached or surpassed them. The revised approach pays special attention to low-income countries, the least developed countries and Africa.

490. At its annual session in May 1996, the Executive Board, in its decision 96/27, called for a study to be submitted in 1998 on the absorptive capacity and financial resource utilization relating to population programmes in recipient countries, in particular in most African countries, especially the least developed countries. The Executive Board also endorsed, in its decision 96/28, the new mission statement for UNFPA as a tool for public information.

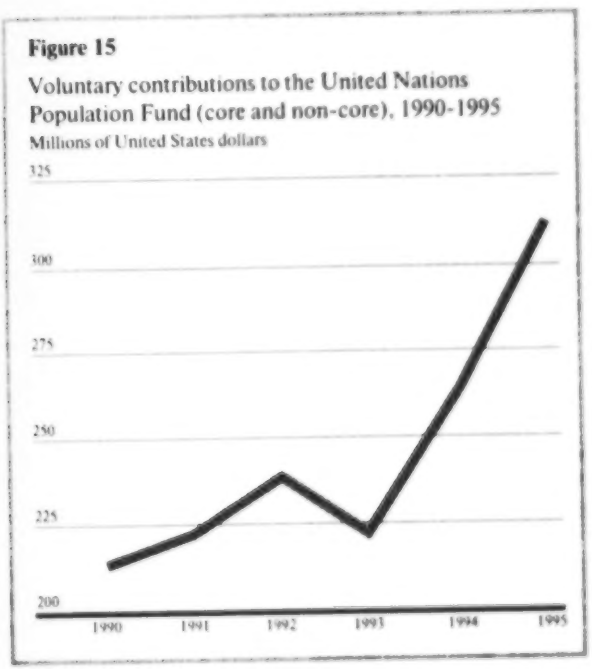
491. UNFPA is participating in the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa. As in the past, the Fund's priority efforts are aimed at building capacities in individual countries; UNFPA programmes in Africa support the Initiative by assisting countries in implementing the Conference's goals and approach to reproductive health, including family planning, and by integrating population considerations into development planning. UNFPA is helping to ensure that population and gender issues are cross-cutting themes to be addressed in all components of the Initiative.

492. The income of the Fund in 1995 was $312.6 million, compared to $265.3 million in 1994, an increase of

17.8 per cent (see fig. 15). Total project expenditures from regular resources in 1995 amounted to $230.9 million, compared to $201.4 million in 1994, an increase of 14.6 per cent. Expenditures for reproductive health and family-planning programmes, and closely associated information, education and communication activities, accounted for some two thirds of the Fund's project expenditures.

Figure 15

Voluntary contributions to the United Nations Population Fund (core and non-core), 1990-1995



493. In 1995, Africa received 31.7 per cent of UNFPA programme allocations, the Asia and Pacific region received 31.1 per cent, the Latin America and Caribbean region 13.9 per cent, and the Arab States and Europe 11.4 per cent. Support for interregional and global programmes amounted to 11.9 per cent of allocations. The Fund continued to concentrate more than 70 per cent of its resources in countries in greatest need of assistance, notably in the poorest developing countries. In 1995, there were 58 priority countries for UNFPA assistance: 32 in Africa, 17 in Asia and the Pacific, 5 in Latin America and the Caribbean and 4 in the Arab States.

4. World Food Programme (WFP)

494. The World Food Programme, directed by Catherine Bertini, stands in the front line of the United Nations battle against hunger and poverty. Its mission is threefold: food for saving lives, food for human growth and food for facilitating self-reliance.

495. In 1995, WFP provided assistance to 50 million people, half of them victims of emergencies. Beneficiaries included 7 million refugees, 14 million internally displaced people and nearly 4 million victims of drought and other natural disasters. Responding to food shortages by relying on its network of country offices and on its expertise in transport, logistics and procurement, WFP provided over 1.6 million tons of food during 1995 in 89 relief operations.

496. On the development side, WFP food aid has also been an effective means of transferring income to the poor, encouraging collective action in poor communities and building long-term assets. WFP was able to reach about 25 million poor and hungry people in 1995, about the same number as the year before. Some 950,000 tons of food were made available for 204 WFP-assisted projects in 81 countries.

497. The biggest share of the WFP portfolio has been allocated to Africa (56 per cent), followed by Asia (28 per cent), the Americas (12 per cent) and Eastern Europe and the former USSR (4 per cent). The composition of the portfolio differed greatly by region. The highest proportion of development assistance was reached in the Americas (99 per cent); development resources in Asia accounted for 80 per cent. The portfolio for Africa consisted of 60 per cent relief operations, and in Eastern Europe and the former USSR relief accounted for 100 per cent.

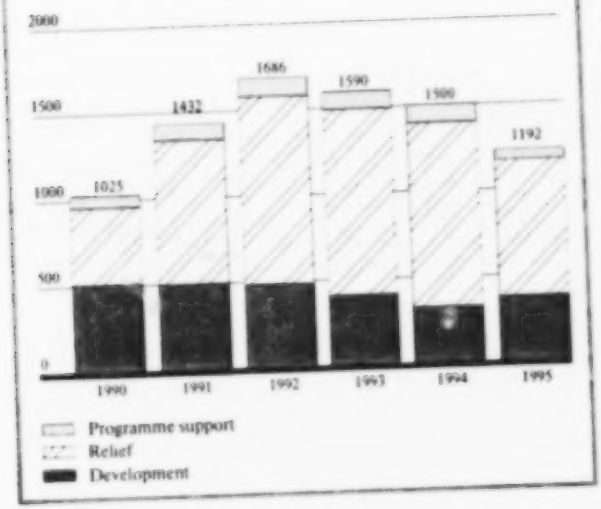
498. From a record of almost 17 million tons in 1993, global food aid fell to 9.5 million tons in 1995. Inevitably, WFP has been affected by this abrupt reduction in supplies, even though the Programme's share of global food aid has increased to almost 30 per cent, compared to 22 per cent in 1993. The total level of resources available to the Programme in 1995 fell to $1.2 billion from $1.5 billion in 1994 (see fig. 16).

499. To maintain all the activities of existing development projects in 1995, approximately 1.4 million tons would have been needed, compared to the 950,000 tons actually disbursed. To manage this resource scarcity, WFP had to cancel resources earmarked for some operational projects, limit budget increases for approved projects and refrain from extending certain projects. In making those decisions, priority was given to better performing projects and to the least developed and low-income food deficit countries.

500. The response to appeals for emergency food aid was more generous. Donors provided 85 per cent of the estimated requirements for WFP relief activities, enabling the Programme to provide sufficient food in most emergency situations. However, there were a number of emergencies (in the Democratic People's Republic of

Figure 16
Expenditure of the World Food Programme, 1990-1995

Millions of United States dollars



Korea, Iraq, Liberia and Sierra Leone) for which adequate levels of resources were not forthcoming. In those cases, WFP had to rely on the small quantity of food resources from up front and completely untied donations to bridge gaps or partially mitigate the suffering of the affected populations.

501. In 1995, WFP spent $250 million on food purchases in nearly 70 different countries. Over half of the food purchases were made in developing countries, bringing benefits in terms of timeliness of delivery, lower transportation costs, greater suitability of local commodities for consumption and strengthening South-South trade.

502. Owing to their crucial role in household food security, women have received a growing share of WFP food assistance in recent years. In 1995, an estimated 60 per cent of the beneficiaries of WFP-assisted human resource development projects were women. In food-for-work projects, the female share is around 30 per cent. The Fourth World Conference on Women was an occasion to strengthen efforts in this area. Preparations for the Conference involved a critical analysis of WFP activities and a search for better ways to respond to gender issues when using food aid. WFP went to Beijing with specific commitments to reduce inequality in women's access to food and to address the specific nutritional needs of women and children. Guided by a task force of senior managers, each country office and headquarters division has contributed to an action plan which will enable WFP to implement its commitments during 1996-2001.

503. Whenever and wherever it can, WFP systematically strengthens linkages between relief and development, exploring at the earliest possible moment opportunities for developmental uses of relief assistance. During 1995 and 1996, food aid was used in support of resettlement, repatriation and reintegration of refugees and the internally displaced, and in the demobilization of soldiers. In addition, food-for-work projects were used for the rehabilitation of war-damaged infrastructure and productive assets. A number of WFP-assisted development projects were formulated or redesigned so as to help vulnerable people in regions moving out of emergency situations, while others focused on disaster preparedness and prevention for people living in areas prone to emergencies.

504. Strengthening coordination at all stages of humanitarian assistance operations — needs assessment, appeals process, implementation, monitoring and evaluation — continued to be a priority for WFP. In 1995, WFP conducted joint assessment missions with UNHCR in 10 countries and regions affected by refugee emergencies, and with FAO in 17 countries and regions affected by natural disasters. As part of the Programme's efforts to work with its partner organizations to raise awareness about humanitarian issues and harmonize intervention strategies, its Executive Director participated in the Madrid humanitarian summit (December 1995), in the discussion of the capacity of the United Nations system in the field of humanitarian assistance at the June 1995 session of the Economic and Social Council, and in the International Committee of the Red Cross conference (September 1995). WFP also works closely with more than 1,000 national and international non-governmental organizations; in July 1996, the Executive Director signed memoranda of understanding on operational collaborative arrangements with four such organizations.

505. The process of reform and revitalization continued apace in 1995. The governing body of WFP approved a medium-term strategic and financial plan for the Programme which incorporates a vision cast over a four-year period, explicit linkage to the policy decisions of the governing body, an overview of WFP activities and operations, alternative scenarios for level of activity by major category (development projects, protracted relief operations and emergency operations), flexible programme support and administrative budget levels, five operational and management priorities, and modalities for the implementation of key policy decisions.

506. To ensure a more sound and predictable resource base, the governing body approved new long-term resourcing and financing policies based on full-cost recovery and greater accountability. The modernization of WFP management practices continued by means of such initiatives as the Financial Management Improvement

Programme, which undertook major initiatives to identify potential savings and to cut costs, for example, in the transport and delivery of food throughout WFP operations.

507. In 1996, the former governing body of the Programme, the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes, was transformed into the WFP Executive Board in accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/162. The Executive Board held its first session in January 1996 and its second session and its annual session in May 1996; all the sessions were convened at WFP headquarters, as envisaged by the General Assembly.

5. United Nations International Drug Control Programme

508. Drug abuse and drug trafficking remained serious problems during the reporting period, leaving almost no country untouched. Activities of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, headed by Giorgio Giacomelli, targeted both demand and traffic.

509. At the country level in 1995, the Programme supported efforts of Governments to establish or strengthen their institutional capacities for drug control, a prerequisite for the elaboration and sustainable implementation of national drug control strategies and master plans. It assisted 29 African States in strengthening the operational capacity of their interministerial policy planning and coordination bodies. Assistance was also provided to the Commonwealth of Independent States in Central Asia, the Baltic States, Eastern and Southern Europe, and States in South-East and South-West Asia, such as Nepal and Viet Nam. Advice and assistance were provided to 28 States in the preparation and implementation of national drug control master plans, and to 20 States in drafting and implementing national drug control laws and regulations.

510. The Programme provided assistance in training to 105 drug law enforcement officers from eastern and southern Africa, as well as 132 senior national officials from West African States, covering drug law enforcement techniques and demand reduction issues. Some 500 law enforcement officials, including police, customs, air and seaport security administrations, from several States in Latin America and the Caribbean were trained in precursor control, investigation techniques and intelligence gathering and analysis.

511. Meetings of heads of national drug law enforcement agencies were held for Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Near and Middle East, and agreement was reached on means to improve cooperation against illicit drug trafficking networks. Additional regional seminars for Africa and Latin America were held in Tunisia and at Santiago in support of the International Narcotics Control Board. In February 1996, the Programme convened an expert group meeting to examine ways of combating illicit maritime traffic in drugs.

512. The Programme assisted Governments in improving their capacity to collect and analyse data on drug abuse, which is essential in elaborating demand reduction programmes focusing on primary risk groups. To improve the ability of Governments to assess drug abuse situations, the Programme organized an expert group meeting at Vienna in September 1995 to review and update the methodology on rapid assessment procedures. Using those procedures, rapid drug abuse assessment surveys were being carried out or have been completed in Bangladesh, Chile, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Kenya, Myanmar and Turkey.

513. A multidisciplinary mission was sent to Afghanistan to prepare a national drug control strategy and programme of assistance. The Programme's 1994/95 ground survey of illicit cultivation of the opium poppy in Afghanistan confirmed the position of that country as the major producer of illicit opiates in the Golden Crescent of South-West Asia.

514. The Programme's investments in alternative development have yielded significant results. In Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province, with the help of government law enforcement measures, the area under illicit cultivation of the opium poppy has been reduced from 7,329 hectares in 1992/93 to 5,215 hectares in 1994/95. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, a Programme-supported project in the Xai Som Boum special region has led to a significant drop in opium production, from 3.5 tons in 1989 to less than 100 kilograms in 1994/95, and a 50 per cent decrease in the number of opium abusers. In Bolivia, Colombia and Peru, the Programme's efforts led to the eradication of approximately 10,000 hectares of illicit coca-bush cultivation and alternative income-generating activities for about 33,000 peasant families. Programmes were also launched in major opium-producing areas of Viet Nam and Myanmar, the latter being the principal producer of illicit opiates in the Golden Triangle of South-East Asia.

515. During 1995, the Programme cooperated with health authorities, particularly in the Bahamas, Barbados, Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, in providing training in treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration. It also started the Caribbean regional certificate programme in addiction studies, with the aim of assisting Governments and non-governmental organizations in the English-speaking Caribbean States to provide drug abuse prevention, treatment and rehabilitation programmes.

516. In 1995, more than 650,000 schoolchildren were reached through the development of school curricula in the Bahamas, Barbados, Bolivia, Colombia, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago, and the territories of Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, the Netherlands Antilles and the Turks and Caicos Islands. Preventive education programmes, including income-generating activities undertaken in out-of-school settings, will concern approximately 100,000 street children at risk in a number of these and other countries.

517. In South-East Asia, the six signatories of the Programme's memorandum of understanding on drug control of May 1995 — Cambodia, China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam — met at Yangon in May 1996 to review progress on intergovernmental cooperation. The first two projects covered, dealing with precursor control and demand reduction among highland communities, have been launched. In South-West Asia, following the signatures of memoranda of understanding, the Programme increased its cooperation with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and the Economic Cooperation Organization by providing technical assistance to workshops and assisting in the preparation of drug control plans.

518. In the Pacific region, the Programme initiated a three-year project to support the drug law enforcement training scheme implemented by the South Pacific Forum. It assisted the Organization of African Unity secretariat in the preparation of the Plan of Action for Drug Control in Africa, 1997-2001. The 1996 Assembly of Heads of State and Government of OAU, held at Yaoundé, confirmed the agreement of the OAU member States to implement the Plan of Action by means of national and subregional strategies with further support from the Programme. In Europe, the Programme is, *inter alia*, seizing the opportunity of the restoration of peace among the countries of the former Yugoslavia to reactivate systematic drug control action in the countries concerned.

519. During 1995, the Programme supported initiatives and programmes to implement article 12 of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, of 1988, and other provisions concerning the monitoring of precursors and essential chemicals used in the manufacture of illicit drugs. Two workshops were held in 1995 in South-East Asia. The Programme has supported the establishment of mechanisms for precursor control in a number of countries in other regions, among them Bolivia, Colombia and Peru.

520. The Programme's laboratory trained 21 analysts from 16 countries in methods for the identification and analysis of drugs in seized material and biological specimens. The Programme also convened two consultative meetings, for the Baltic States and the five members of the Commonwealth of Independent States in Central Asia, to improve cooperation between laboratories in the preparation of forensic evidence.

521. The Programme completed a study on the global threat posed by the illicit manufacturing, trafficking and abuse of stimulants, a wide range of psychotropic substances based on the amphetamine molecule. An expert group and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs considered that the issue needed urgent international attention. At an international meeting planned for November 1996, the Programme will involve policy makers in considering the adoption of measures to counter the illicit manufacture and trafficking of such stimulants.

522. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs, in December 1995, approved the budget proposals for the biennium 1996-1997 for the Fund of the Programme, which amounted to $152,448,500. The proposal reflected a reduction in the field office network and project activities at headquarters. The Fund was dependent on a few major contributing Governments, with seven Governments and the European Commission providing 90 per cent of the total voluntary contributions for the biennium 1994-1995. A critical mass of resources, marked by a degree of certainty and duration, is needed by the Programme to implement its mandate in a sustainable and effective manner.

523. A memorandum of understanding was signed between the Programme and the International Olympic Committee in February 1995 highlighting the importance of the theme "Sport against drugs" and the role of athletes in joining the campaign against drug abuse. Pursuant to that collaborative arrangement, the Programme organized its first exhibit on this theme at Vienna in June 1996, followed by similar events in New York and Atlanta, where the centennial Olympic Games were held in July-August 1996.

6. United Nations Office for Project Services

524. The United Nations Office for Project Services, headed by the Executive Director, Reinhart Helmke, is a fully self-financing operation, accustomed to the pressure of keeping its expenses within the limits of income earned from the provision of services while continuously adjusting the way it conducts business in response to market forces and demands for development services.

525. The Office introduced a new delivery system in October 1995 to fulfil expectations for greater responsiveness, quality, and reduction in the cost of services delivered, while providing value for money. The

approach consists of placing appropriately skilled staff in self-contained teams that focus, under single management, on the needs of specific clients and portfolios. This reorganization, which was brought about primarily by the contributions of staff, from design to implementation, has added new dimensions to the human resources management equation. Accordingly, the Office's second business plan, covering 1996, includes the design of a simple performance evaluation and incentive system, assessment of training needs and redefinition of generic job descriptions.

526. The decentralization policy of the Office is based on the principle that proximity to the operations at project level has a major influence on both efficiency and productivity. Within this framework, the Management Coordination Committee has recently endorsed the recommendation of the Executive Director to establish the Rehabilitation and Social Sustainability Unit at Geneva as from July 1996, and to relocate the Division for Procurement Projects to Copenhagen later in 1996.

527. In 1995 the Office began to provide project inputs and management services to organizations of the United Nations system other than the traditional clients (UNDP, UNFPA, the United Nations Capital Development Fund, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and the International Fund for Agricultural Development. Since November 1995, the Office has signed agreements with UNHCR, UNICEF, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, the World Meteorological Organization, the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, and similar agreements are under discussion with the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, WFP and WHO and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Centre for Human Rights. While these activities represent a relatively low dollar value, such agreements are a signal that the system-wide trend towards greater efficiency and cost-effectiveness is being applied to practical situations.

528. In the first year of its existence as a separate entity, the Office demonstrated the viability of the self-financing principle. Projections of income and anticipated administrative expenditures proved to be reassuringly accurate. The financial management model introduced by the Office in September 1995 ensures greater transparency with respect to budget preparation, monitoring and review. Current data, as they evolve, are processed on an iterative basis, which involves frequent and regular monitoring of the project portfolio and actual delivery figures. This model, which has been analysed and welcomed by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, is different from those used in the past, and a review of its principal variables is a standing feature of the Management Coordination Committee meetings.

529. At the end of 1995, the Office's project portfolio reached a value of over $1 billion, of which $423.3 million represented new projects accepted for implementation and initiated during 1995. Project expenditures in 1995 amounted to $382.9 million in services and inputs provided for 1,873 development projects worldwide. Purchases of equipment and goods represented 35 per cent of total expenditure, project personnel costs 29 per cent and services and works 28 per cent. The bulk of project expenditures — 32 per cent — were effected in the Latin America and Caribbean region, closely followed by Africa, with 24 per cent. A steady growth of the Office's activities in Europe and countries in transition is reflected in the 43 per cent increase in expenditures in that region from 1994 to 1995.

530. The project portfolio of the Office continues to be highly diversified along thematic lines. In particular, the demand for services in post-conflict rehabilitation is on the rise. In 1995, phase II of the Cambodian Area Rehabilitation and Regeneration project was launched, and early in 1996 new projects were begun in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Djibouti, the Great Lakes region of Africa and Rwanda. In the environmental protection area, the Office is consolidating, in partnership with UNDP, its already vast experience in the implementation of projects funded by the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol. During the period from September 1995 to June 1996, the Office began implementation of 77 new Fund projects, procuring for factories in the developing countries the technology packages necessary for phasing out the emission of ozone-depleting substances from their industrial production processes.

7. Joint programmes for development

531. In an era of declining resources and increasingly complex challenges, collaboration and cooperation among multilateral organizations and other development partners, including the Bretton Woods institutions, have become more essential than ever. Ideas and resources must be utilized in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible. During the past year, the United Nations system continued to reinforce its existing joint programmes and to create new synergies in several key areas of global concern.

532. The crucial role played by the United Nations in organizing international cooperation for sustainable development, and in fostering consensus around development objectives and policies, was recognized by the

seven major industrialized countries at their annual summit meeting at Lyon in June 1996. In an economic communiqué, the seven countries encouraged the United Nations to clarify its role and comparative advantages, to enhance its operational framework, and to ensure genuine coordination at all levels. Major examples of joint programmes for development include the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the Global Environment Facility, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research and the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Panel on Forests. The activities of each are outlined briefly below.

United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa

533. Launched in March 1996, the 10-year, $25-billion System-wide Special Initiative on Africa is the largest coordinated United Nations undertaking in history. It was developed in close collaboration with African Governments and regional organizations, and is designed to maximize the impact of United Nations system support for African development. The Bretton Woods institutions are fully involved, as are non-traditional partners such as leaders of business and civil society. A Steering Committee, co-chaired by the Administrator of UNDP and the Executive Secretary of ECA, was established to ensure effective and coordinated implementation.

534. The Special Initiative began with a year-long political mobilization campaign to raise Africa's priority status on the international agenda and to provide a new stimulus to African development. Accordingly, the Initiative figured prominently at several important international and African meetings, including the ninth session of UNCTAD, Habitat II and the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government. On 2 July 1996 at Geneva, I chaired an informal consultation with donors to review progress and sustain support for this undertaking.

535. The operational activities of the Initiative are focused on 14 components concentrated in the following sectors: basic education, basic health, governance, food security, water and sanitation, peace-building and informatics. In all of these areas, the Initiative seeks to give practical expression to the policy commitments made in the past, such as the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and the System-wide Plan of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. For each of these major components, responsibility for mobilizing resources and coordinating implementation has been given to a lead United Nations agency or agencies. At the local level, Governments, members of civil society and United Nations country teams will be the central actors.

Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

536. The Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS is a cooperative effort of UNICEF, the World Bank, UNDP, UNFPA, WHO and UNESCO. The Programme came into full implementation in January 1996, following the approval in November 1995 of a $120 million programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997, a strategic plan for 1996-2000 and the mode of operations at the country level. A memorandum of understanding among the co-sponsoring organizations was signed early in 1996 by all six executive heads.

537. As at 1 July 1996, an estimated 21.8 million adults and children were living with HIV/AIDS, and an estimated 5.8 million people had died from HIV/AIDS-associated conditions since the start of the global epidemic. More than 3.1 million new HIV infections were expected to occur during 1996, or more than 8,500 a day — 7,500 adults and 1,000 children. The Programme's response encompasses technical assistance, education, advocacy, collaboration with non-governmental organizations and with people living with HIV/AIDS, and efforts to mobilize resources.

538. The Programme is developing global, regional and country networks for the exchange of experiences and information, and task forces to handle global or region-specific issues. Inter-country technical teams are being established by region, and will be based in Côte d'Ivoire, South Africa and Thailand; locations for teams in Europe and Latin America are to be identified. Working Groups have been established in 17 critical areas, and programme staff have met with political, economic and social leaders in more than 50 countries to discuss the dimensions of the epidemic. The Programme was a co-sponsor of the Eleventh International Conference on AIDS, which was held at Vancouver in July 1996 and was attended by more than 15,000 delegates.

Global Environment Facility

539. The Global Environment Facility was established by the World Bank in 1991. In 1992, following the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the Facility was restructured into a partnership between UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank. The restructuring included a new and replenished Trust Fund. As at July 1996, 156 Member States were participating in the Facility, and funds committed amounted to $2 billion for the period from June

1994 to June 1997. The Global Environment Facility is the only area where new funding has been made available to meet the additional needs of Agenda 21.

Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research

540. The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research is chaired by the World Bank and includes FAO and UNDP. It cooperates with Governments, private foundations and development agencies in the provision of financial support for international research on improving crops and animal production in developing countries, *inter alia*, through support to national and regional research centres.

Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Panel on Forests

541. The Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Panel on Forests was established in 1995 in response to a request from the Commission on Sustainable Development. Members of the Panel include FAO, UNEP, UNDP, the World Bank, the International Tropical Timber Organization and the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The secretariat of the Panel is based at United Nations Headquarters. The Panel is scheduled to submit a major report on its work to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fifth session in 1997.

E. The humanitarian imperative

542. Over the last five years, the international community has faced the challenge of responding to humanitarian crises that have increased both in number and complexity. The world's conflict zones, formerly associated with military confrontation between States, now routinely feature intra-state civil wars and ethnic conflicts resulting in widespread human suffering, deprivation and destruction.

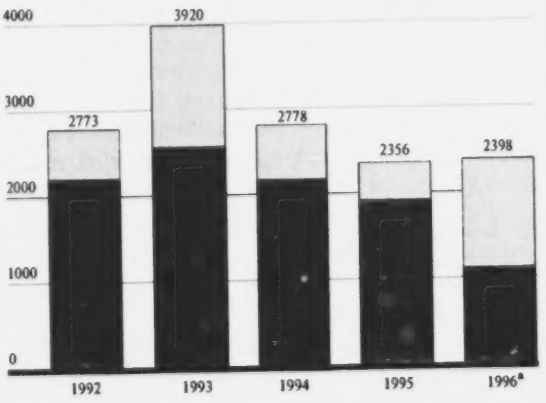
543. Humanitarian assistance efforts have been altered to reflect those new realities. Psychosocial rehabilitation for children, demobilization and reintegration of combatants, the rebuilding of social and educational facilities and the provision of other items required to resume normal life have all become essential features of humanitarian programmes. Many actors, including in particular non-governmental organizations, have played a key role in these efforts. With so many different partners, the task of obtaining consensus and coordinating a larger and disparate relief community has become considerably more complex.

544. The phenomenon of "forgotten" emergencies constitutes another challenge for the international community. New crises erupt and capture the world's attention and energy, while existing emergencies, with no resolution in sight, gradually recede from view. The human suffering in these latter cases does not lessen, but international interest in them does. Repeatedly over the last year, I have attempted to draw the world's attention to these long-standing crises, and I will continue to do so. In October 1995, I requested the Emergency Relief Coordinator to travel to three such areas — Afghanistan, Liberia and Sierra Leone — to review humanitarian requirements and revive international support in meeting the needs of the affected populations. These "orphan" situations must not be allowed to languish.

545. The success of our collective response to humanitarian crises depends to a large degree on the availability of the necessary human, material and financial resources. From September 1992 to April 1996, the United Nations launched 64 consolidated inter-agency appeals seeking some $11 billion for relief programmes (see fig. 17). The response of the international community has been generous. Nearly $7 billion in donor contributions were received by the appealing organizations, representing nearly 64 per cent of the total sought.

Figure 17
United Nations consolidated inter-agency humanitarian assistance appeals, 1992-1996

Millions of United States dollars



[a] As at 31 July 1996.

546. Since my last report, some 23.3 million people have been targeted to receive assistance through United Nations inter-agency appeals covering Angola, Afghanistan, the Caucasus region, the Central African Republic, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Great Lakes region, Iraq, Lebanon, Liberia, the Russian Federation (Chechnya), Sierra Leone, the Sudan and the former Yugoslavia. Of the $2.4 billion requested in the 13 appeals launched since September 1995, a total of $1.1 billion has so far been pledged or carried over. Although contributions average 47 per cent of the requirements, the level of response varies considerably, from 73 per cent in the case of Liberia to zero for the Central African Republic. The funding requirements for just two appeals — the former Yugoslavia and the Great Lakes region — together amount to roughly $1.5 billion, or 60 per cent of the current total requirements.

547. The past four years have shown a steady increase in natural disasters, by approximately 10 per cent per year (see table 3). The amount of emergency grants and contributions through the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the number of relief shipments from its emergency stockpile at Pisa, Italy, have more than doubled over the same period.

Table 3

Natural disasters: casualties, damage and contributions

	1992	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*
Number of disasters	54	68	75	82
Number of dead	6 971	13 542	7 572	12 746
Number of missing	258	1 631	1 989	1 461
Amount of damage[a]	2.1	15.8	9.0	117.0[b]
Contributions reported to DHA[c]	257.4	77.5	114.0	104.7
Contributions channelled through DHA[c]	3.7	4.3	7.6	7.4

[a] Billions of United States dollars.
[b] Includes $96 billion following the earthquake in Kobe, Japan.
[c] Millions of United States dollars.

548. Between 1 September 1995 and 1 July 1996, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs provided assistance to 36 Member States to help them cope with the impact of 53 natural disasters and environmental emergencies. In 24 cases, disaster-affected countries requested the Department to launch appeals for international assistance on their behalf. The Department issued some 115 situation and information reports to inform the world community on the consequences and needs arising from such disasters. The international community in turn reported more than $104 million in contributions for affected countries. During the same period, the Department arranged for 97 relief shipments from Pisa to deliver urgently needed emergency supplies valued at over $6.4 million. Nine field missions of the Department's United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination teams, composed of emergency management specialists, were dispatched to disaster sites between September 1995 and July 1996 to support local authorities and United Nations coordinators.

549. Natural disaster reduction remains a core activity for the Department. In 1995, the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction was, for the first time since its inception, discussed under the item entitled "Environment and sustainable development", both at the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council and in the General Assembly. Yet despite wide recognition of the need to help countries worldwide reduce the social and economic impact of disasters, the provision of resources to the Trust Fund of the Decade remains a matter of serious concern.

550. In its resolution 48/157, the General Assembly requested that I appoint an expert to study the impact of armed conflict on children. Within the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and with support from the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat and UNICEF, the expert, Graca Machel, initiated a global process of research and consultation involving Governments, United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, regional organizations and all the components of civil society. Her final report addresses a wide range of issues, including the physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of children affected by armed conflict; the phenomenon of child soldiers; the impact of armed conflict on girls and women; the need for education in emergency situations; and the relevance and adequacy of existing human rights and humanitarian standards. The expert makes recommendations in each of these areas. Member States should give her report and its recommendations full consideration to ensure effective follow-up.

1. Refining the tools of humanitarian action

551. The changed environment in which humanitarian assistance is delivered has required United Nations organizations and agencies continuously to readjust and refine operational modalities and to develop policies for addressing new problems, such as negotiating access to affected populations, safeguarding the neutrality of humanitarian assistance, dealing with the proliferation of landmines and meeting the needs of internally displaced persons.

552. In addition, Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/56 on strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance specifically requires the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to work with United Nations agencies to identify gaps and imbalances in current arrangements so as to improve overall capacity for response. The Department, led by Yasushi Akashi, is steering this process, which will culminate in decisions on measures to enhance response capacity to be taken by the Inter-agency Standing Committee. To ensure full participation and transparency of the process, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs is consulting with relevant agencies and has convened regular meetings with Member States (also foreseen in resolution 1995/56) to keep them informed of progress made.

553. Donors are increasingly concerned with issues of cost-effectiveness and the impact of humanitarian assistance, as evidenced by the recent major multi-donor study on Rwanda. Humanitarian organizations have worked to enhance established monitoring and evaluation units. In order to improve analysis of humanitarian action, the Department will produce two to three lessons-learned studies a year, focusing on recent coordination exercises and thematic issues.

554. Work has continued on developing the Humanitarian Early Warning System within the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. The database allows the Department to focus attention on emerging situations of concern both in discussions with its humanitarian partners, including non-governmental organizations, and with the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peace-keeping Operations through the three departments' "Framework for Coordination" exercise, which since December 1995 has sought to improve the Secretariat's coordination of emergency and humanitarian operations.

555. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs is also developing an international global network for communication and information support known as Relief Web, which is envisaged as the principal repository of information for the humanitarian community in managing the response to humanitarian emergencies. This effort focuses on the creation of an on-line information system, publicly available through existing networks; the development of regional information centres capable of reporting complex emergency information; the promotion of common standards for information collection, analysis, integration, exchange and dissemination; and the adoption of a system of alerts to ensure prompt and effective humanitarian responses.

556. In recent years, the Security Council has sometimes used non-military sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter. These measures have had unintended consequences for some civilian populations in the targeted countries, vulnerable groups in particular. To shed light on the humanitarian impact of those sanctions, the Inter-agency Standing Committee commissioned a study, which provided a *tour d'horizon* of the issue and emphasized how to minimize or at least reduce the tension between the main purpose of sanctions as an instrument in restoring peace and their negative impact on vulnerable groups. The study recommended, *inter alia*, that humanitarian requirements be exempted from the sanctions regime and that the Security Council be advised about the likely humanitarian impact before sanctions are imposed. The Inter-agency Standing Committee has reviewed the study and identified three issues for follow-up action: exemptions for humanitarian requirements; establishing a mechanism to provide timely information to the Security Council on the possible impact of sanctions; and further work on the development of methodology and indicators for the assessment of the humanitarian impact of sanctions.

557. As was acknowledged in last year's report, the relationship between relief and development, particularly in conflict settings, is complex and needs to be assessed to ensure that interventions are mutually reinforcing. Considerable effort has been expended over the past year to determine the most effective ways to relate relief and development activities to post-conflict peace-building. The main focus has been on post-conflict recovery programmes as an important force in supporting the peace process. It is increasingly apparent, for example, that recovery programmes can be a useful component in peace negotiations or in preserving pockets of tranquillity even during periods of conflict. There is a general agreement amongst United Nations agencies that preparations for post-conflict recovery programmes must begin during the period of conflict, even in the midst of humanitarian efforts, or the transition to development may be significantly delayed, ultimately at the possible cost of peace itself. In early 1996, the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions undertook a comprehensive review of the United Nations system's ability to support peace-building through post-conflict reconstruction activities.

558. In its resolutions 49/139 B and 50/19, the General Assembly gave its strong endorsement to the "White Helmets" initiative. The Government of Argentina has been very active in promoting implementation of the initiative, contributing $1 million to the United Nations Volunteers account and dispatching several teams of Argentine volunteers as specialists to Angola, Armenia, Gaza, Haiti and Jamaica. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs has collaborated with the Government of Argentina in implementing the initiative and has prepared a draft framework for the selection and deployment of volunteer teams. The Inter-agency Standing Committee has focused

on the questions of financing and field deployment, with a view to providing guidance on how the humanitarian partners should deal with this new element in the delivery of humanitarian assistance and on a clear framework for collaboration between the Department and the United Nations Volunteers.

559. The United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination team, through the participation of Member States, has continued to contribute to greater transparency and effectiveness in the Department's assessment and coordination activities, and to a more efficient mobilization and use of international resources in response to emergencies. At the end of 1995, the team was composed of members from 18 countries and had been mobilized 17 times in response to sudden-onset emergencies. To meet field coordination requirements, steps were taken to establish a field coordination support programme and standby arrangements with Member States to access technical and logistical support.

560. With regard to natural disasters, the momentum created by the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, held at Yokohama, Japan, in May 1994, has been sustained and widened in conceptual terms. Consequently, the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation, and in particular its Plan of Action, has been transformed into a comprehensive and structured sequence of sectoral and cross-sectoral activities at all levels. In March 1996, the Scientific and Technical Committee of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction took stock of the first two years of the post-Yokohama process and developed guidelines and recommendations for implementation of the Decade in general and the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action in particular. Emphasis will be placed on the interrelationship between the effects of natural disasters and sustained economic and social development, and on improved early warning for both natural and environmental disasters.

561. Over the last five years, activities of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs/UNDP disaster management training programme have focused on institution-building, networking between institutions and individuals, production and dissemination of training materials, research, training of trainers and workshops. The programme has produced a body of training materials, established a network of six regional collaborating institutions and created a cadre of 55 inter-agency trainers from United Nations agencies. To date, more than 70 countries have been covered by national or subregional workshops. In 1995-1996, country workshops were held in Azerbaijan, Cuba, Eritrea, Madagascar, Mozambique, Papua New Guinea and Zaire, and subregional workshops were conducted for countries of the Arab Magreb Union and the Indian Ocean Commission.

562. An inter-agency consultation on humanitarian training was held in June 1995 and led to the launching of the complex emergencies training initiative. Since then, considerable progress has been made in producing training materials on humanitarian coordination and contingency planning and in carrying out a joint assessment of training needs and priorities.

2. Cooperation with regional arrangements or agencies

563. Cooperation has continued in the procurement, storage and delivery of relief items on a cost-sharing basis and, in particular, on the joint operation of emergency stockpiles. Memoranda of understanding on the cooperative use of the Pisa warehouse, signed respectively in 1994 and 1995 with WHO and WFP, have increased the capabilities of the Department's Pisa warehouse to provide rapid and adequate response to disasters.

564. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs, together with other United Nations agencies, assisted the Inter-agency Procurement Services Office of UNDP in the development of a compendium of generic specifications of emergency relief items. It was agreed that United Nations agencies would help the Office to maintain and update the catalogue section(s) for which they had been designated lead agency. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs is responsible for the telecommunications section.

565. Pursuant to resolution 7 of the World Telecommunication Development Conference, organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) at Buenos Aires in 1994, resolution 36 of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (Kyoto, 1994) and the recommendation in the report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council for 1995, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs regularly convenes the Working Group on Emergency Telecommunications and maintains its secretariat. Substantial progress was made on both elements covered by the Working Group and the related project of the Department on the definition of a coordination mechanism for the field telecommunications networks used by United Nations agencies and other partners during emergencies, and the preparation of a draft for an international convention for the facilitation of emergency telecommunications for humanitarian aid. The coordination mechanism will be finalized during the summer of 1996, as will a consolidated approach to a reduction of

communications fees, which is expected to result in considerable savings.

566. Within the framework of its project on the use of military and civil defence assets in disaster relief, arrangements have continued for strengthening cooperation between the Department and NATO, the Western European Union and the Inter-American Defense Board. A field manual was finalized by a working group comprising representatives of 30 countries, designed to support operational level pre-planning and crisis management actions. A reference document for coordination of humanitarian air operations and a first set of training modules were also finalized.

567. Since early 1995, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, in coordination with the Inter-agency Standing Committee, has sought the most effective use of military and civil defence assets in support of all types of humanitarian operations. This led to the establishment by the Standing Committee in March 1996 of a Military and Civil Defence Unit within the Department to be a service centre for United Nations agencies and departments. The Unit does not replace existing agency/department emergency response mechanisms but is intended to provide a common support service to ensure an integrated approach to the issue. The project on military and civil defence assets will be integrated into the Unit.

568. A model agreement between the United Nations and the Government of a Member State concerning measures to expedite the import, export and transit of relief consignments and possessions of relief personnel in the event of disasters was prepared in cooperation with the World Customs Organization and interested United Nations agencies, international and national relief organizations. On this basis, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs is negotiating bilateral agreements with Governments on application of the recommended measures.

569. The Department and UNEP continued consolidating humanitarian and environmental assistance to countries facing environmental emergencies. A Joint Environment Unit has been mandated to improve the international response to ecological disasters by acting as a broker between affected and donor countries, as a clearing-house for information and as a switchboard for disaster notification and alert. This integrated response capacity is bringing international assistance to countries facing environmental emergencies such as chemical and oil spills, industrial accidents, forest fires and other sudden-onset emergencies. The Unit has already responded to requests for assistance from Albania, Barbados, Chile, Djibouti, Ecuador, Guyana, Montenegro, Mozambique, the Philippines, Romania, the Russian Federation, Rwanda, Seychelles, Slovenia, Turkey and Ukraine.

3. Relief operations

(a) Caucasus

570. No substantive progress was achieved during the period under review in political talks on the issues related to Abkhazia/Georgia and the Nagorny Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. As a result, the future of more than 1 million refugees and internally displaced persons remains uncertain. Of this number, more than 900,000 people (250,000 in Armenia, 405,000 in Azerbaijan and 250,000 in Georgia) were receiving United Nations assistance.

571. The United Nations and its humanitarian partners continued to implement the second consolidated inter-agency appeal for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia to cover humanitarian requirements for the period from 1 April 1995 to 31 March 1996. As at 29 December 1995, contributions received from the international community amounted to $71 million, or 60 per cent of total requirements. After examining the shortfall, a supplementary appeal was issued in February 1996, requesting $37 million for humanitarian operations during the first five months of 1996.

572. In February and March 1996, the United Nations, non-governmental organizations, international organizations and donor Governments jointly conducted humanitarian needs assessments in the region. Subsequently, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs convened a meeting at Tbilisi in March 1996 to discuss the findings of the assessments with humanitarian partners, among them senior officials from donor capitals and authorities from the three countries of the Caucasus. The meeting concluded that, while all three countries were moving to the post-emergency phase, humanitarian assistance continued to be necessary to meet the most pressing needs of vulnerable groups, including refugees and internally displaced persons. Consequently, the United Nations launched an inter-agency consolidated appeal in May for $101 million to cover humanitarian needs for the period from 1 June 1996 to 31 May 1997.

(b) Chernobyl

573. The United Nations remains deeply concerned by the toll that the Chernobyl disaster has taken on the populations of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, and is committed to pursuing measures aimed at alleviating the consequences they continue to face. The disaster that occurred on 26 April 1986 has been a national tragedy for the three countries, displacing more than 400,000 people, severely damaging social conditions and leading to radioactive contamination and health risks, both physical

and psychological, that continue to affect a great number of people. The authorities of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine are spending considerable resources of their own in addressing the many consequences of the catastrophe, but additional help — including concerted action by the international community — is still urgently needed.

574. Organizations in the United Nations system began working together at an early stage. Through the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations continues to play a fundamental role, together with a number of countries, international organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the European Union and WHO, and non-governmental organizations, which have provided outstanding assistance in their fields of expertise.

575. In its resolution 50/134, the General Assembly declared 26 April 1996 International Day Commemorating the Tenth Anniversary of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant Accident. Accordingly, a number of important conferences and meetings were organized by the three affected countries, as well as by IAEA, WHO and the European Union. The consequences of Chernobyl will remain on the international agenda. Regrettably, the funds of the United Nations Trust Fund for Chernobyl have been practically exhausted and without further support from the international community the Organization's efforts may simply cease.

(c) Russian Federation

576. In the beginning of 1995, following a request from the Government of the Russian Federation, United Nations agencies commenced a programme of emergency humanitarian assistance for some 220,000 persons in Dagestan, Ingushetia and North Ossetia who were displaced by the fighting in Chechnya. Approximately $24 million was requested in 1995 for a humanitarian programme involving UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, WHO and the International Organization for Migration, under the coordination of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. Donor response to the 1995 appeals was high, meeting 90 per cent of the requirements and supporting large-scale assistance in the form of food aid, domestic items and medical supplies.

577. In April 1996, a consolidated inter-agency appeal was issued for a reduced humanitarian programme targeting some 92,000 persons displaced by the continued fighting in Chechnya. The appeal seeks $13 million for activities of UNHCR, WHO, WFP and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and covers the period January through December 1996, with the exception of WFP activities, which will continue through March 1997.

(d) Sri Lanka

578. By the end of 1995, the number of people displaced internally by the armed conflict in Sri Lanka had increased to some 720,000. An additional 290,000 were considered to be economically affected by the conflict. The cessation of hostilities agreement, which had come into effect on 6 January 1995, ended on 19 April when government military facilities were attacked. The Government launched an offensive in October 1995, which resulted in the capture of the city of Jaffna, the capital of the Northern Province, and in a large-scale exodus of some 400,000 to 500,000 people, many of whom were already displaced, from Jaffna to welfare centres and makeshift arrangements with friends and relatives elsewhere in the Province. A large number of displaced and economically affected populations are also found in the Eastern Province and in districts bordering on the conflict zones.

579. While the United Nations system has not received a formal appeal from the Government of Sri Lanka to assist in an accelerated relief effort, various agencies have been asked to continue the work undertaken previously. UNHCR has provided relief assistance to returned refugees and to displaced persons in welfare centres and has carried out small-scale community-based projects through established field offices in the conflict-affected areas. WFP has provided emergency food assistance since 1987 to some 55,000 displaced persons in welfare centres outside the conflict zones, and has been closely monitoring the food situation for the newly displaced inside the conflict area. UNICEF provides various relief items, including water and sanitation facilities, medical kits and education materials, and supports a community-based programme to help children affected by trauma and an education-for-conflict-resolution programme in the school system.

580. UNDP had planned a programme for reconstruction and reconciliation but had to abandon it as the peace process was reversed. UNDP is providing institutional support to the Government's relief coordination efforts. The emergency situation is expected to continue and perhaps worsen as conflict continues and drought conditions add to the problems of displacement.

(e) Sudan

581. My report of 22 September 1995 on emergency assistance to the Sudan noted positively the extension of

Operation Lifeline Sudan activities both in terms of their technical range and the scope of their impact on needy populations. The report expressed appreciation to the various concerned parties for their support in making those developments possible. It also examined those obstacles continuing to impede progress, *inter alia*, the incidents of kidnappings and misappropriation and the climate of insecurity affecting relief workers' activities; the lack of progress regarding a new agreement on humanitarian access; lack of adequate and timely donor funding to activities of Operation Lifeline Sudan; and continued disagreement on operational modalities affecting key partners in those activities.

582. Since last year, however, increasing difficulties have been encountered, owing to new measures imposed by the Government of the Sudan that have restricted access to the affected population. These actions contradict the Government's repeated commitments to the General Assembly to assist United Nations humanitarian efforts in the Sudan. In late November 1995, the Government imposed a universal ban on all Operation Lifeline Sudan flights. This restriction, which I condemned publicly in my press statement of 4 December 1995, was lifted early in December, with the exception of a no-fly zone in areas bordering on Uganda.

583. By mid-1996, the situation had deteriorated further. Following unprecedented bombings of areas of ongoing relief operations by government aircraft in February, I issued a public condemnation of the incidents. In April 1996, an attempt to introduce new procedures for managing Operation Lifeline Sudan led to delays in the Government's approval of requested flight destinations for April and a temporary ban on the use of one of the Buffalo aircraft used in the Operation. Combined with the Government's ban on the use of the Hercules C-130, this created a situation in which less than 20 per cent of food and non-food requirements were delivered that month. In May and June 1996, government restrictions hindered the Operation's efforts in southern Sudan to such an extent that only 14 per cent of total aid requirements were delivered from its base in northern Kenya. In March and July 1996, I issued press statements expressing my grave concern over the bombings by the Government of the Sudan of locations in southern Sudan where Operation Lifeline Sudan was conducting relief activities. Specific mention was made of incidents at Akuer, Paluer and Maridi.

584. In view of continuing difficulties on the question of access, I issued a press statement on 15 July in which I drew attention to various restrictions imposed by the Government of the Sudan, including a ban since July 1995 on the use of certain Operation Lifeline Sudan aircraft and government interdiction on the Operation's access to areas of the Nuba mountains where assessments of humanitarian needs were required, to certain locations affected by outbreaks of cholera and severe diarrhoea-related diseases, and to Pochalla, a location in southern Sudan where some 15,000 persons had been stranded without relief assistance since the latter part of June as a result of unprecedented floods. On 19 July, I condemned a series of attacks on the Acholi-pii refugee camp near Kitgum in northern Uganda, in which 107 Sudanese refugees, mostly women and children, were brutally killed. In an encouraging development, permission to resume Operation Lifeline Sudan C-130 flights was given in July and restrictions on other aircraft types were lifted for August flight operations.

585. Rebel factions, including the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement, began denying access by Operation Lifeline Sudan to destinations during the second quarter of 1996. The behaviour of the rebels further constrained the ability of the Operation to meet the needs of populations at risk in the conflict zones. Restrictions by the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement, although less severe than those imposed by the Government, constituted a breach of the March and May 1994 agreements with the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development affecting the Operation's humanitarian assistance, both of which the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement had endorsed.

586. In early February 1996, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs issued the 1996 United Nations consolidated inter-agency appeal for the Sudan, in which United Nations agencies (FAO, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO) requested $107.6 million to meet the continuing, urgent humanitarian needs of 4.25 million people. Regrettably, by April 1996, the level of announced donor contributions was seriously low, even compared with 1995 funding levels, which at 50.2 per cent of total requirements were well below those in previous years. This situation prompted the Department to respond positively to a UNICEF request in March for a $900,000 cash advance from the Central Emergency Revolving Fund for logistics support to activities of Operation Lifeline Sudan in the southern sector. By July 1996, the situation had not improved: only 20.9 per cent of total requested funding had been contributed by donors. Many critically important activities, especially in southern Sudan, were curtailed as a result.

587. Beginning in the second half of 1995, the Government of the Sudan indicated its preference for the transfer of Operation Lifeline Sudan activities in northern Kenya to Sudanese territory. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs made representations to the Government to the effect that the formal review of the Operation would be the appropriate framework to examine questions concerning its operational efficiency and effectiveness, including the advisability of a relocation of

facilities. This understanding has held throughout the itial phases of the review, which began last November. hanks to the flexibility demonstrated by government ounterparts and the timely show of financial support from ie donor community, it is projected that by September a eport will be circulated to the Government, the Sudanese eople's Liberation Movement, donors and relief agencies or comments, in advance of meetings that month with onors at Geneva and subsequently with the Government at Khartoum and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement t Nairobi.

588. Since December 1992, efforts to secure greater umanitarian access for Operation Lifeline Sudan relief ctivities have taken the form of proximity talks among the oncerned parties organized by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. The last agreement, reached in May 1994, secured access to a substantially greater number of locations under the exclusive control of any one of the different parties. However, further talks were deemed necessary to extend the scope of the agreement to include additional locations within such areas and locations involving cross-line convoys or access to conflict areas. In April 1996, the United Nations Special Envoy for Humanitarian Affairs for the Sudan, Vieri Traxler, was requested to undertake a mission to Khartoum and Nairobi to conduct tripartite talks. This new round of talks was to have included a review of agreements signed at Nairobi in March and May 1994 and would have sought a renewed commitment to the principles contained in those agreements, an assessment of their implementation and an examination of those areas where the current agreements can be improved and strengthened.

589. Unfortunately, subsequent developments made it impossible to proceed with the talks as planned. These were, first, the formation of a new Government in the Sudan, and secondly, and more significantly, the shifting of political alliances, which has resulted in a peace agreement between the Government and some of the southern factional leaders. Under the circumstances, it became difficult to identify all the interlocutors having the necessary level of representation and authority from the various parties and whose participation in the talks was required to achieve results. A draft agreement is being prepared by the Special Envoy and Operation Lifeline Sudan staff that will be submitted to the Government and to other parties identified by the Operation as useful counterparts as a basis for the resumption of talks.

590. The pattern of fragmentation among southern movements has had an impact on work with the Operation in terms of both heightened insecurity and an increasingly restrictive view on the application of humanitarian principles from the Government and southern movements. For international humanitarian organizations working in the Sudan, this general tendency has over the last 12 to 15 months been reflected, *inter alia*, in an increasing number of security-related incidents and a more aggressive insistence from both the Government and principal southern groups that humanitarian aid activities be conducted in a manner more compatible with their respective political strategies. As the civil war is prolonged, maintaining the parties' adherence to an objective, that is, non-political, course of humanitarian actions has become an increasing challenge.

Relief operations in natural disasters

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

591. The humanitarian emergency in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains of serious concern. Various United Nations agencies and programmes, including FAO, UNDP, UNICEF, WHO and WFP, as well as the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, are continuing their efforts to assist the country in meeting its nutritional needs.

592. Exceptionally heavy rains in July and August 1995 caused unprecedented flooding in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Government estimated that the floods had caused $15 billion worth of damage and affected 5.2 million people. On 25 August, on behalf of the Government, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs launched an appeal for international assistance.

593. The Department subsequently led an inter-agency assessment mission, from 29 August to 9 September, visiting the three worst-affected provinces (North Pyongang, Chagang and North Hwanghae). On 5 September, the Department issued a joint United Nations appeal for a total of $15.7 million (later adjusted to $20.1 million), focusing initially on the immediate needs of 500,000 persons made homeless. As of 16 March, overall support from the international community had exceeded $30 million, of which $9 million was channelled through the United Nations appeal.

594. In April 1996, the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea requested the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to launch a United Nations consolidated inter-agency appeal, which was drafted on the basis of inputs from United Nations agencies and in consultation with the Government. The appeal was launched on 6 June, requesting a total of $43.6 million for emergency assistance to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for the period from 1 July 1996 to 31 March 1997. The major portion (over $26 million) of the funds requested is for the procurement of food, representing the most urgent need. More than $10 million is sought for the

recovery of arable lands, a key to the resumption of normal food production, and slightly less than $6 million is requested to restore basic health services that were disrupted or destroyed by the floods. The initial response to this appeal has been generous, amounting to over $17 million.

4. Relief operations in the Near East

595. The activities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) — the United Nations agency with the largest operational presence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip — continued to emphasize constructive support to the Middle East peace process and enhancement of socio-economic conditions within the Palestinian refugee community. The Agency's mandate was extended until 30 June 1999 by the General Assembly in its resolution 50/28 A. In January 1996, I designated Under-Secretary-General Peter Hansen Commissioner-General for UNRWA, with headquarters at Gaza and Amman.

596. Within the context of further advancements in the peace process, UNRWA sought to strengthen its relationship with the Palestinian Authority and continued its efforts to harmonize its services in the West Bank and Gaza Strip with those of the Authority. Harmonization was pursued in the education, health and relief and social service sectors through formal and informal coordination mechanisms, senior-level contacts, sharing of human resources, joint planning and adoption of Authority standards by the Agency where feasible.

597. The Agency continued to provide ad hoc assistance to the Authority, including through technical assistance, information-sharing, access to emergency medical services and provision of buildings and vehicles. The Agency also handed over to the Authority an uninhabited refugee camp site in the Jericho area. Agency support for the Palestinian election process included assistance with voter registration, transport of election material and use of Agency premises for voting. UNRWA participated in the multilateral aid coordination mechanisms associated with the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories. The Agency's mandate under General Assembly resolution 49/21 O to disburse voluntary contributions by donors for salaries and other start-up costs of the Palestinian Police Force ended in December 1995, after the last disbursement in July 1995.

598. The Vienna headquarters of UNRWA was relocated to the area of operations, in accordance with the decision of the Secretary-General announced in June 1994 and General Assembly resolution 49/35 A. Following a number of early steps to transfer certain activities and staff to Gaza, construction of a new building to accommodate headquarters offices at Gaza commenced in October 1995 and was completed in July 1996, at which time the Vienna-based units were transferred. The Agency's 10-member Advisory Commission was to be reconstituted at Amman. Significant constraints on Agency operations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip arising from security restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities were of particular concern to the Agency in view of the relocation.

599. The Agency's Peace Implementation Programme, introduced in October 1993, continued to expand, with the aim of improving infrastructure, stabilizing socio-economic conditions and creating jobs among the refugee community in the Agency's five fields of operation. By June 1996, the Agency had received a total of $192.6 million in pledges and contributions under the Programme. The 276 projects funded under the Programme were for construction, maintenance and upgrading of Agency facilities, rehabilitation and repair of refugee shelters, improvements to the environmental health infrastructure and enhancement of the Agency's income-generation programme. Work proceeded on the construction and equipping of the 232-bed European Gaza Hospital, which was expected to be completed before the end of 1996. Towards the end of the reporting period, it was agreed that the hospital would eventually become an integral part of the health system of the Palestinian Authority.

600. Through its regular programmes of assistance, UNRWA provided essential education, health and relief and social services to 3.3 million Palestinian refugees registered with the Agency in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Agency's ongoing special hardship programme provided direct relief to refugee households with no male adult medically fit to support them and without sufficient income from other sources to meet basic needs. Under the programme, some 179,178 refugees were provided with food rations and medical care subsidies and were eligible for additional assistance, including shelter rehabilitation, emergency cash grants, poverty alleviation initiatives and preferential access to training centres.

601. The Agency's 637 schools accommodated 421,854 pupils, mostly at the elementary and preparatory levels during the 1995/96 school year, with 5,449 training places offered at the eight Agency training centres. The Agency's network of 121 health centres and points, including the 43-bed Kalkiliya Hospital in the West Bank, handled 6.6 million patient/visits during the year. Environmental health services, including sewage and refuse disposal, waste-water management and provision of clean drinking water, were

provided to over 1 million refugees in 59 camps. A range of social services was provided to over 25,000 refugees through the women's programme, community rehabilitation and youth activity centres sponsored by UNRWA. The income-generation programme provided loans valued at $4.4 million to 1,640 enterprises, with emphasis on the Gaza Strip.

602. Emergency humanitarian assistance was provided by the Agency as needs arose and to the extent possible within available resources. To address the socio-economic hardship resulting from the extended closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip imposed in February 1996, the Agency launched an emergency job-creation programme in March, which provided temporary gainful employment to over 2,500 participants. To meet humanitarian needs arising from hostilities in southern Lebanon in April, UNRWA conducted emergency distributions of basic commodities and supplies in the Saida and Tyre areas with the support of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. Some 600 displaced persons also found temporary shelter in four Agency schools. With regard to the situation of Palestinians required to leave the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya who were encamped at the Libyan-Egyptian border, UNRWA and UNHCR monitored their situation. The Agency also provided emergency assistance to Palestinians stranded between Egypt and the Gaza Strip.

603. The Agency's financial position continued to worsen, with 1995 the third consecutive year in which a budget deficit was recorded. The UNRWA regular and emergency cash budget was $632 million for the biennium 1994-1995 and $692 million for 1996-1997, with a significant part of the increase attributable to the inclusion of a $25.4 million provision for separation benefits payable to 22,000 staff upon the eventual dissolution of UNRWA. The Agency ended 1995 with a funding shortfall of $8.4 million, reducing its working capital to $8.2 million. In that context, the Agency was forced to carry forward into 1996 some $14.5 million in austerity measures originally imposed in 1993, and in June 1996 introduced a further $9 million in cost-saving measures in response to a sizeable projected deficit for the year. In addition to the deficit in the Agency's regular budget, shortfalls in funding were experienced in the special budgets for the headquarters relocation and the European Gaza Hospital.

F. Protection and resettlement of refugees

604. At the end of 1995, the population of concern to UNHCR stood at some 26.1 million worldwide, of whom 13.2 million, or just over half, were refugees; the remainder were returnees (3.4 million), internally displaced persons (4.6 million) and others of humanitarian concern (4.8 million). In the absence of massive new refugee influxes, the work of UNHCR throughout 1995 and the first part of 1996, under the direction of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, was characterized by the consolidation of programmes and mechanisms launched in response to previous large-scale emergencies; by the pursuit and implementation of durable solutions, whether voluntary repatriation, local integration or resettlement; and, where circumstances have permitted, by the elaboration of preventive strategies.

605. While refugee numbers continued to show a slight decline during the period under review, concern remained over the real, potential and perceived burden of protecting and assisting refugees. Many Governments continue to uphold asylum as an indispensable instrument for the international protection of refugees and to demonstrate commitment to receiving and hosting refugees in cooperation with UNHCR. Others, however, have denied entry to asylum-seekers, forcibly returned them to their countries of origin or restricted their entitlement to basic rights. This has again underscored the need, on the one hand, to strengthen the institution of asylum and, on the other, to continue to promote innovative approaches that take due account of the protection needs of refugees and the legitimate concerns of countries of asylum and origin.

606. UNHCR has continued to make efforts to ensure that the special needs of refugee women and children are taken fully into account. A memorandum of understanding signed in March 1996 between UNHCR and UNICEF defines the beneficiary populations (refugees, returnees, internally displaced persons and affected local populations) covered by the two agencies. The memorandum covers advocacy, promotion and strategy-formulation roles, in particular with regard to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as operational, reintegration and rehabilitation activities.

607. UNHCR has paid particular attention to the coordination of its activities with other United Nations agencies, notably within the context of Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/56 on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations. UNHCR also participates actively in parallel inter-agency consultations under the aegis of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the Inter-agency Standing Committee. A wide-ranging consideration of resolution 1995/56 by the Executive Committee of UNHCR has been structured around emergency response, solutions, prevention and protection.

1. Emergency response

608. No new large-scale refugee emergencies occurred in 1995 on the scale experienced in recent years, giving rise to some optimism that a period of increased stability in international affairs might be in sight. Nevertheless, ongoing emergencies presented various challenges. UNHCR continued to cope with a series of crises in Bosnia and Herzegovina, peaking with the fall of the eastern Muslim enclaves in July 1995 and the forced exodus of 36,000 people. A further major upsurge of displacement occurred in August 1995 with a mass influx of approximately 200,000 refugees from the Krajina region of Croatia into the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In the northern Caucasus, where the Office had envisaged phasing out its emergency operation for the displaced population from Chechnya (Russian Federation) at the end of 1995, new developments generated an additional influx of displaced persons into the neighbouring autonomous republics and necessitated a continuation of humanitarian assistance by UNHCR. The Office also responded to crisis situations in Guinea, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda.

609. In response to those situations, UNHCR has consolidated the wide range of arrangements for contingency planning and emergency preparedness and response that it has developed since 1991. These mechanisms have been complemented by external standby arrangements. External rosters have been established with the Norwegian and Danish Refugee Councils, United Nations Volunteers and Rädda Barnen (the Swedish Save the Children Fund). In 1995, UNHCR entered into a new emergency standby arrangement with the Register of Engineers for Disaster Relief (REDR) (Australia), which agreed to provide engineers for emergency deployment.

610. Working in close coordination with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, UNHCR has made considerable progress in the development of self-contained government service packages for exceptional emergency response. In a related initiative, steps are being taken to gauge better the traditional response resources provided by non-governmental organizations in refugee emergencies. UNHCR has begun work on the establishment of a database to which 30 key non-governmental organizations will contribute.

611. In recent years, the environmental impact of large-scale refugee presence has become an increasingly important preoccupation for countries of asylum. UNHCR has taken steps to ensure that humanitarian assistance is provided in an environmentally sensitive manner and in a way that is supportive of and reinforces development initiatives. At its forty-sixth session in 1995, the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme adopted a new policy on the environment that aims to reflect environmental concerns in a more comprehensive manner throughout UNHCR refugee assistance operations. To give effect to that policy, new environmental guidelines have been developed.

2. The search for solutions

612. Voluntary repatriation is regarded by UNHCR as the preferred durable solution to refugee situations. Developments in many parts of the world have provided continued grounds for hope that voluntary return can become a reality for a large number of the world's refugees. During 1995, over 1 million refugees returned to their countries of origin, some 450,000 of them with UNHCR assistance, most notably to Afghanistan, Myanmar and Rwanda. At the end of the year, UNHCR was assisting some 2.7 million returnees.

613. Following the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement in November 1995, a durable solution to the plight of the 2 million Bosnian refugees and displaced persons appeared within reach. Within the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNHCR has been designated the agency responsible for planning and implementing the repatriation of the many Bosnians who can now contemplate return. In March 1996, the Office submitted an operational plan in which it elaborated the conditions required for repatriation and the principles that should govern the return of refugees and displaced persons. At Florence in June, the High Commissioner presented to the Mid-Term Review Conference of the Peace Implementation Council 18 target areas for a proposed international reconstruction effort that could help up to 165,000 additional persons to return to their war-damaged homes this year. The Office remained concerned, however, at the pace of the implementation of the civilian component of the peace plan and at the impact this may have on repatriation. More than seven months after the signing of the Dayton Agreement, only 70,000 to 80,000 refugees and internally displaced persons had returned to their homes.

614. In the Great Lakes region of Africa, durable solutions continued to prove more elusive. While three quarters of a million Tutsi refugees from earlier periods had returned home and 400,000 more recent Hutu refugees, the repatriation of the remaining 1.7 million refugees had stagnated. The Tripartite Commissions on repatriation involving Rwanda, UNHCR and Burundi, the United Republic of Tanzania or Zaire have focused on ways of enhancing repatriation through mass information campaigns, separation of intimidators from refugees and cross-border visits. However, major obstacles to large-scale

repatriation of Rwandan refugees remained, including continuing intimidation in refugee camps, increased tensions and insecurity in the border region and the lack of a comprehensive political solution. Escalating violence in Burundi was an additional cause of grave concern. In late July, over 12,000 refugees were sent back to Rwanda. The continuing deterioration of the situation in Burundi led UNHCR to step up its contingency plans and preparedness measures.

615. In South-East Asia, the winding up of the Comprehensive Plan of Action for Indo-Chinese Refugees, which was due to terminate in June 1996, marked the closing of a chapter in a refugee situation that originated in the 1970s. In North and Central America, the decision by the Mexican authorities in late 1995 to permit the local integration of Guatemalan refugees who do not wish to repatriate has opened up a new avenue for the solution of the one remaining refugee problem in that region.

616. Voluntary repatriation of refugees frequently takes place in the aftermath of conflict. Invariably, peace after fratricidal communal strife is frail and in need of sustained support. The short-term rehabilitation assistance provided by UNHCR to facilitate the social and economic reintegration of the returning refugees needs to be anchored within a broader recovery and reconstruction strategy that ensures a continuity from initial recovery to sustainable development. UNHCR, therefore, has been reinforcing its operational linkages with United Nations agencies and other development partners. In Mozambique, where the voluntary repatriation of 1.7 million refugees was completed last year, important lessons have been learned in the course of such collaboration. Jointly with UNDP, UNHCR has agreed on a framework for inter-agency initiatives to promote a smooth transition from humanitarian assistance to sustainable human development. Both the Office's new memorandum of understanding with UNICEF and a revision of the 1994 memorandum with WFP now under discussion place particular emphasis on the need to develop such linkages further. Consultations with the World Bank and the regional development banks have also continued.

617. Human rights considerations must also have a central place in post-conflict peace-building. UNHCR has cooperated with the human rights mechanisms of the United Nations within the framework of overall United Nations operations, such as those in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, El Salvador and Rwanda, to link human rights concerns with the protection of refugees and the monitoring of returnees. Collaboration has increased with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, especially at the level of field operations. A memorandum was signed in 1995 between the UNHCR branch office in Rwanda and the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda in an effort to enhance complementarity of action in the areas of monitoring and institution-building. Ongoing contacts with human rights working groups, rapporteurs, experts and monitors are also an integral part of UNHCR's approach.

3. Preventing refugee crises

618. In the past few years, a number of different factors have combined to bring about a fundamental reassessment of traditional approaches to the refugee problem. These include, for example, the strain placed upon the international relief system by the recent spate of internal wars and complex humanitarian emergencies; the mounting concern of host and donor countries about the financial and other costs incurred in providing refugees with indefinite protection and assistance; and a growing awareness that refugee movements can constitute a serious threat to national, regional and even international security, in particular when they involve countries of asylum that have weak economies, fragile ecologies and a delicate balance of ethnic groups.

619. As a result of these developments, a new international consensus has emerged, recognizing that the mandate of UNHCR to seek permanent solutions for the problem of refugees gives the organization a legitimate interest in the prevention of conditions that lead to refugee movements by means of operational activities within countries of origin. These include important elements of capacity-building and institutional development. At its forty-sixth session, in 1995, the Executive Committee called on UNHCR to strengthen its activities in support of national capacity-building. UNHCR has, where appropriate, provided advice and assistance to Governments in building legal, judicial and administrative capacity.

620. A dual preoccupation with solutions and prevention has been the impetus behind efforts to develop, together with interested Governments and intergovernmental organizations, a comprehensive approach to the problems of refugees, returnees, displaced persons and other forms of involuntary displacement in the Commonwealth of Independent States and relevant neighbouring States. In collaboration with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the International Organization for Migration, UNHCR organized a regional conference in May 1996. All 12 Commonwealth of Independent States countries and other interested States and intergovernmental organizations participated in the preparatory process and the conference itself. The Conference endorsed a programme of action and a framework for follow-up activities aimed at managing migratory flows and developing institutional capacity to prevent mass displacement.

621. The regional conference has highlighted, among other issues, the importance of dealing with problems of statelessness as part of preventive strategies. Recognizing the importance of this question in other parts of the world, UNHCR has also played a more active role in regional discussions aimed at resolving certain nationality issues. The Executive Committee in 1995 adopted a conclusion on the prevention and reduction of statelessness and the protection of stateless persons. Stressing that the prevention and reduction of statelessness and the protection of stateless persons are important in the prevention of potential refugee situations, the Committee encouraged UNHCR to continue its activities on behalf of stateless persons and, in particular, actively to promote accessions to the statelessness conventions.

4. Funding activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

622. In 1995, UNHCR received a total of $1.3 billion in voluntary contributions towards its General and Special Programmes. By 22 July 1996, a total of some $620.7 million had been received against General and Special Programme requirements, thus totalling an estimated $1.4 billion.

G. Protection and promotion of human rights

623. During the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, Member States reaffirmed human rights as a central issue on the agenda of the Organization and of the world community in general. This constitutes both an important challenge and a major responsibility for the United Nations.

1. Activities of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

624. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, José Ayala Lasso, has further expanded his action in the field and consolidated efforts at reforming various aspects of the Organization's human rights machinery. In 1995, the High Commissioner initiated a process aimed at restructuring the programme of work and the organization of the Centre for Human Rights in order to enable it to achieve its objectives effectively and efficiently. The first stage consisted of an analysis by the staff of the Centre, which was followed by a review of its current organization and practices, carried out with the assistance of a consultancy firm. This led to the development of a vision of the future shape and nature of the support that would be given by the Centre to the human rights programme. The results were embodied in a change plan, which contains projects for reorganization. It focused on five areas within a new organizational structure of the Centre for Human Rights composed of three branches. The change plan is reflected in a report I presented to the Fifth Committee in June 1996.

625. Human rights questions have been on the agenda of all main global activities or conferences of the United Nations. The High Commissioner, at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, the Fourth World Conference for Women in Beijing and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in Istanbul, took steps to help ensure that the high level of existing United Nations human rights standards was preserved and reflected in the conference outcomes. Increasing cooperation and coordination in human rights activities, in particular at the field level, was also given high priority. The High Commissioner has discussed human rights matters at the meetings of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and with the group of seven major industrialized countries, as well as with the Organization of American States, OAU, the Association of South-East Asian Nations, European Union, the Commonwealth of Independent States, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Rio Group and other important regional and subregional forums.

626. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action encouraged the establishment and strengthening of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights. An increasing number of Member States are seeking assistance from the Centre for Human Rights. Cooperation with academic and research institutions and human rights centres is also being actively pursued.

627. A meeting of experts will be held in November 1996 to analyse ways and means of giving a practical response to the right to development and to advise the High Commissioner on the most effective manner of implementing that right. Additional activities in this area included a meeting with the regional commissions, held in July at United Nations Headquarters. Meetings on the impact of economic and development policies on human rights have been held with the World Bank and other international financial institutions.

628. To strengthen coordination among the various human rights mechanisms, the High Commissioner addressed the chairpersons of treaty bodies during their sixth meeting, in September 1995, and, in May 1996, the third meeting of special rapporteurs/representatives/experts and chairpersons

of the special procedures and advisory services programme of the Commission on Human Rights.

2. Advisory services and technical cooperation

629. Programmes in advisory services and technical cooperation were strengthened considerably during the period under review, in accordance with directives of the General Assembly, the Commission on Human Rights and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. In terms of programme management, a number of initiatives were undertaken, including the specialized training of staff in the area of project formulation, management and evaluation. Revised guidelines and formats have been developed and applied on the basis of methodologies and procedures currently in use in other United Nations agencies and programmes. Financial management of the Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation, which provides much of the funding for activities conducted under the Programme of Action, has been strengthened with the appointment of a coordinator of the Fund and the development of standardized procedures for financial monitoring and reporting.

630. Requests for assistance under the Programme have increased dramatically over the past several years, and the period 1995-1996 was no exception. The Programme is currently managing 71 ongoing and pipeline projects. Programme components include the drafting and implementation of national action plans for the promotion and protection of human rights; establishment and strengthening of national human rights institutions; assistance in incorporating international human rights standards into national law and policy; strengthening of the administration of justice; promoting respect for the rights of the child; human rights training for various professional groups (including United Nations officials); training in treaty reporting; and human rights education, information and documentation.

631. Over the past several years, the Centre for Human Rights has established a field presence in a number of countries for the purpose of implementing projects of technical cooperation and advisory services. The field offices that were particularly active during 1995-1996 include Cambodia, Malawi and Mongolia. The operation in Cambodia is the largest human rights technical cooperation programme currently under way. In February 1996, the High Commissioner signed a memorandum of understanding with the Government of Cambodia on the implementation of a two-year programme of human rights technical cooperation. The Centre for Human Rights also currently has field offices in Burundi, Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia (see below). While the majority of projects implemented under the Programme are country-specific, a number of global and regional activities were initiated or further developed during the period. These include global and regional training programmes for the military and police and training for regional prison officials (Latin America and the Caribbean); a global training programme for lawyers and judges; and a global programme on human rights education to support the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education.

3. Addressing human rights challenges in the field

632. The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina committed the parties to ensuring the highest level of internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms to all persons within their jurisdiction. Among other things, the Agreement invited the High Commissioner, the Commission on Human Rights and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to monitor closely the human rights situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including through the establishment of local offices and the assignment of observers, rapporteurs or other relevant persons on a permanent or mission-by-mission basis.

633. At the London Peace Implementation Conference, held in December 1995, the High Commissioner outlined participation in the peace implementation process in three ways: through developing and conducting training for international personnel responsible for monitoring and other activities related to human rights; by making available a limited number of human rights experts to the High Representative responsible for implementation of the civilian aspects of the Agreement; and by continuing to support the work of the Special Rapporteur and the expert in charge of the special process dealing with missing persons in the former Yugoslavia, both of whom are appointed by the Commission on Human Rights. At the same time, the High Commissioner decided to maintain and possibly to enlarge the already established presence in the field, currently 11 human rights experts.

634. Pursuant to action by the Commission on Human Rights, the High Commissioner has initiated steps to create the Human Rights Field Operation in Burundi as part of a preventive human rights action he initiated in June 1994. The observers in Burundi will participate in efforts aimed at preventing and limiting human rights violations and inter-ethnic violence. They are mandated to bring cases of alleged violations to the attention of the authorities, to recommend remedial action, to follow up on subsequent developments and more generally to help foster a climate

of peace, confidence and tolerance amongst all components of the Burundian population, in cooperation with all relevant actors, including international agencies and programmes and local non-governmental organizations. A first contingent of five observers arrived at Bujumbura in April 1996. Depending on the security conditions, the political situation and the availability of funding, further groups of observers will reinforce the Operation, first at Bujumbura and if possible gradually throughout the country. At this stage, it is envisaged that up to 35 observers will be sent. The agreement of the Government will be sought at each additional step.

635. In October 1995, the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda entered its second year. With the departure of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda in March 1996, the role of monitoring and reporting, in particular becomes all the more important, especially with regard to the return of refugees from Zaire. At the local level, the Operation's staff work in daily contact with local justice officials, including prosecutors and judicial police. They fulfil a multifaceted support function, facilitating and delivering material aid, assisting in the resolution of human rights problems and maintaining liaison with administrative and military officials where there might be a lack of cooperation.

636. Following the recommendation of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Zaire and the subsequent resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights, the Centre for Human Rights has been working towards creating a human rights presence in Zaire to monitor the situation of human rights throughout the country and to advise national authorities and non-governmental organizations on human rights promotion and protection.

637. In its resolution 1036 (1996) of 12 January, the Security Council expressed its full support for the elaboration of a concrete programme for the protection and promotion of human rights in Abkhazia, Georgia, as described in my report of 2 January, and called upon the Abkhaz authorities to cooperate fully with efforts to that end. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights sent a mission to Tbilisi and Sukhumi in February 1996. The mission elaborated a draft outline of a programme, setting out the objectives, mechanisms for implementation, projects and activities and the organizational framework, which is now in the process of being implemented.

4. Activities of the Commission on Human Rights and its subsidiary bodies

638. The 1996 session of the Commission on Human Rights underlined again the central role the international community and the people of the world have assigned to the United Nations in the field of human rights. More than 2,300 people participated in the Commission's proceedings. I addressed the opening session and outlined some of my views on democracy and human rights. The Commission deals with a wide range of human rights issues, some of which are among the most difficult faced by the international community. There are disagreements, but it is reassuring to observe that, this year, over 90 per cent of the Commission's resolutions were adopted by consensus.

639. The Commission is elaborating new international standards to protect children and to recognize and protect the rights of indigenous people. It is also taking a close look at racism and the rights of minorities and seeking to ensure that the rights of women are fully incorporated into the Organization's work. Once again it considered reports on the human rights situation in a number of countries and dealt with reports of individual violations such as arbitrary and summary executions, torture and disappearances. In that context, visits take place to some 30 countries a year and over 1,500 individual cases of alleged serious violations are communicated to Governments by urgent appeals.

5. International human rights treaty system

640. The treaty bodies have seen considerable growth in their activities, in particular because of the increasing number of ratifications and in part because of their enhanced visibility. In the past 12 months, the seven principal human rights instruments, including the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, received a total of 44 new ratifications, accessions or successions. The Convention on the Rights of the Child now has 187 States parties. The number of ratifications or accessions to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families is 7; 13 more are needed for the Convention to enter into force.

6. Social justice

641. Social justice was again recognized during the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization as an essential element in fulfilling the Charter's purpose of promoting social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. No greater denial of social justice can be found than extreme poverty and exclusion. I have met in both New York and Geneva with families from all over the world living in extreme poverty, and I have encouraged them to come to the United Nations and work together with us to respond to that scourge.

642. The human rights programme has studied and made recommendations on the phenomenon of extreme poverty and is dealing with many other crucial aspects of the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. The Commission on Human Rights, for its part, has also made progress in promoting the right to development by adopting a consensus resolution on this issue. It has called for voluntary reports from States and established a special group of experts to prepare a comprehensive strategy for promoting and achieving the right to development.

IV

Preventing, controlling and resolving conflict

A. Implementing an Agenda for Peace

643. During its fiftieth session, the General Assembly continued to accord high priority to its deliberations on the recommendations contained in "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277-S/24111) and, in particular, the "Supplement to 'An Agenda for Peace'" (A/50/60-S/1995/1). The Assembly's Informal Open-ended Working Group on an Agenda for Peace has continued its deliberations on the four key areas it had identified: preventive diplomacy and peacemaking; post-conflict peace-building; coordination; and the question of United Nations-imposed sanctions. To assist the efforts of the Working Group and its four subgroups, my senior staff have provided briefings on several occasions. The Working Group had held more than 82 meetings by the end of July 1996 and was expected to submit draft resolutions to the General Assembly by the end of its fiftieth session.

644. The active consideration by the Assembly of "An Agenda for Peace" and its "Supplement" was further testimony to the belief that the prevention of conflicts through early warning, quiet diplomacy and, in some cases, preventive deployment, is better than undertaking major politico-military efforts to resolve conflicts after they have broken out. If the United Nations is to play a timely and constructive role in averting or mitigating the destructive effects of complex crises, the various elements of the Organization must have an early, common understanding of the nature of the problem and the options for preventive action. Therefore, and as I pointed out in the "Supplement", it is crucial that the relevant departments in the Secretariat function as an integrated whole under the authority and control of the Secretary-General.

645. During the reporting period, the three departments of the Secretariat primarily concerned with the prevention, control and resolution of conflicts — the Departments of Political Affairs, Humanitarian Affairs and Peace-keeping Operations — have continued to maintain close coordination in carrying out their respective activities through the Framework for Coordination. As noted in my last report, this mechanism is a flow-chart of actions that range from routine monitoring and early analysis of developments worldwide to formulation of options for preventive action, fact-finding, planning and implementation of field operations, and conduct of evaluations or lessons-learned exercises. The forthcoming availability to the Departments of Political Affairs and Peace-keeping Operations of the Humanitarian Early Warning System database developed and maintained by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs will greatly facilitate this task.

646. To improve further the Framework for Coordination, and in order to ensure that the actions described above are not left to chance or to individual initiative, a standing Oversight Group of senior officers was created in December 1995. This Group, which meets weekly, reviews potential and/or ongoing crisis situations on the basis of information provided by designated officers and determines whether a given situation warrants the interdepartmental consultations foreseen in the Framework; if so, the Group ensures that such consultations are initiated promptly. The Oversight Group does not itself conduct early warning analysis or formulate policy options. Its primary objective is simply to ensure the timely commencement of consultations within the Framework.

647. Work has also begun on how to improve coordination at the country level, in pre-mission planning and in end-of-mission assessments and lessons-learned exercises.

648. To ensure continuous consultation between the Secretary-General and the Security Council and to assist the latter in staying abreast of the latest developments, particularly in the area of peace-keeping operations, one of my Special Advisers, Chinmaya Gharekhan, continues to serve as my personal representative to the Council. Troop-contributing Governments are also understandably anxious to be kept fully informed, and I continue to provide those Governments with regular briefings and to engage in

dialogue with them about the conduct of the operation in question. Members of the Security Council have been included in such meetings, which the Council has decided to formalize. This reform should not, however, lead to any blurring of the three distinct areas of authority: the overall political direction given by the Security Council; executive direction and command for which the Secretary-General is responsible; and command in the field, which I entrust to the chief of mission.

649. I have consistently encouraged closer cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular with regard to preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping. This type of cooperation has been welcomed by both the General Assembly and the Security Council. To explore and exploit the full potential of such cooperation, I convened at Headquarters on 1 August 1994 the first-ever high-level meeting between the United Nations and regional organizations and arrangements with which it had practical experience of cooperation in peacemaking and peace-keeping in the field. I convened a second such meeting on 15 and 16 February 1996, bringing together 13 regional organizations for fruitful discussions on new, practical and effective ways of working together.

B. Preventive diplomacy and peacemaking

650. The primary responsibility for preventive action and peacemaking rests with the Department of Political Affairs, headed by Marrack Goulding.

651. Member States continue to attach importance to preventive diplomacy and peacemaking as the most cost-effective ways of preventing disputes from arising, stopping existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and controlling and resolving existing conflicts. I continue to receive mandates from the General Assembly and the Security Council to maintain existing efforts, and to undertake new ones, in this field. My special representatives, special envoys and other emissaries are actively engaged, on a resident or visiting basis, in helping me to implement these political mandates in Afghanistan, Burundi, Cambodia, Cyprus, East Timor, El Salvador, Georgia, Guatemala, Haiti, Liberia, Myanmar, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Tajikistan and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and soon, it is hoped, in Rwanda.

652. Preventive diplomacy is particularly favoured by Member States as a means of preventing human suffering and as an alternative to costly politico-military operations to resolve conflicts after they have broken out. I have come to the conclusion, however, that the activity we call "preventive diplomacy" should be renamed "preventive action". Diplomacy is certainly a well-tried means of preventing conflict. The United Nations experience in recent years has shown, however, that there are several other forms of action that can have a useful preventive effect: preventive deployment; preventive disarmament; preventive humanitarian action; and preventive peace-building, which can involve, with the consent of the Government or Governments concerned, a wide range of actions in the fields of good governance, human rights and economic and social development.

653. "Peacemaking" is also a term that requires definition. As employed by the United Nations, it refers to the use of diplomatic means to persuade parties in conflict to cease hostilities and to negotiate a peaceful settlement of their dispute. As with preventive action, the United Nations can play a role only if the parties to the dispute agree that it should do so. Peacemaking thus excludes the use of force against one of the parties to enforce an end to hostilities, an activity that in United Nations parlance is referred to as "peace enforcement".

654. The last year has witnessed abhorrent terrorist crimes; as a result, there is a greater sense of urgency in the international community about the need for more effective measures against the perpetrators of terrorism and their sponsors. The Summit of Peacemakers held at Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, on 13 March 1996 to confront the acts of violence in the Middle East was the most significant demonstration of the international community's commitment to take action. The Summit stressed the need to promote coordination of efforts to stop acts of terror and to cut off the sources of financing for terrorist groups. At the Summit, I stressed the pioneering role of the General Assembly in adopting on 9 December 1994 the Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, which it reaffirmed in its resolution 50/53 of 11 December 1995. The adoption of that resolution meant that the United Nations was the only global forum where countries had come together to work against terrorism and it was, therefore, through decisions taken by the Assembly that States could find the instruments to combat terrorism as a global threat. The United Nations is ready to serve as a mechanism for international mobilization against terrorism.

C. Peace-keeping

655. United Nations peace-keeping continued to be a dynamic and demanding activity, responding to continuing turbulence in relations between States and to armed conflict within State borders. While the number of United Nations peace-keepers declined dramatically, from 67,269 in July 1995 to 25,296 in July 1996, the complexity of their tasks did not diminish (see table 4). At the same time, the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, headed by Kofi Annan, has taken the closure or scaling down of some operations as an opportunity to take stock, consolidate and build upon the organizational achievements of the last few years.

656. Of the 16 peace-keeping operations currently deployed, most are confronted with exceedingly difficult missions, reflecting the fact that most of today's conflicts are fought within States, not only by regular armies but also by militias and civilians with ill-defined chains of command. Such conflicts are sometimes marked by the collapse of State institutions and a breakdown of law and order. Cease-fire agreements, when achieved, are often fragile. Humanitarian emergencies are commonplace, exacerbated by warring parties' often deliberate obstruction

Table 4

Peace-keeping troops, military observers and civilian police in peace-keeping operations as at 31 July 1996

	Troops	*Observers*	*Police*	*Total*
UNTSO	—	173	—	173
UNMOGIP	—	44	—	44
UNFICYP	1 202	—	33	1 235
UNDOF	1 043	—	—	1 043
UNIFIL	4 489	—	—	4 489
UNIKOM	936	238	—	1 174
UNAVEM	6 392	408	254	7 054
MINURSO	47	212	26	285
UNPF	79	—	—	79
UNTAES	4 636	100	441	5 177
UNMIBH	3	50	1 641	1 694
UNPREDEP	1 044	36	26	1 106
UNMOP	—	28	—	28
UNOMIG	—	122	—	122
UNMIH	1 267	—	272	1 539
UNOMIL	1	9	—	10
UNMOT	—	44	—	44
Total	21 139	1 464	2 693	25 296

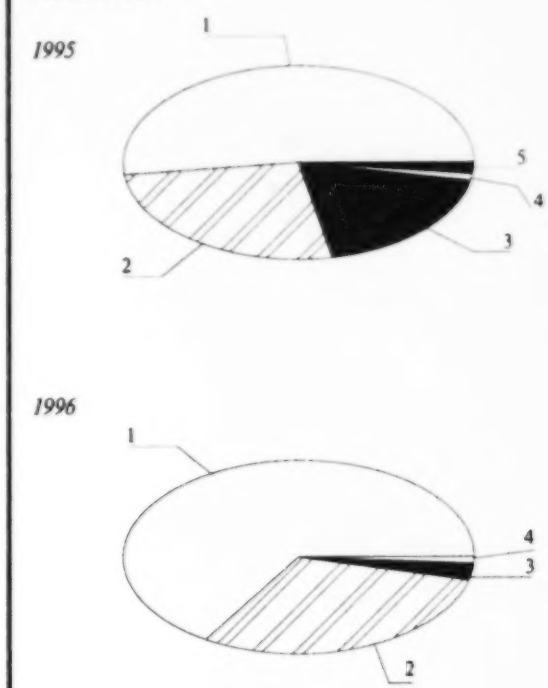
of relief efforts. Negotiated peace settlements, when accomplished, must cover a wide range of military, political, humanitarian and other civilian matters. Such agreements are not self-executing; rather, sustained and intensive efforts by United Nations peace-keeping missions are essential to ensure compliance. And for the settlements to endure, long-term programmes are required, with the contribution of many different parts of the United Nations system, to address the root causes of the conflict and to promote national reconciliation.

657. In such challenging and dangerous circumstances, a United Nations operation offers a stabilizing element that can help to prevent a tense situation from escalating or exploding. I am grateful to the men and women who serve the international community in this way, often tipping the balance, quite literally, from war to peace (see figs. 18-20). I would like to acknowledge, especially, the debt owed to those who have given their lives.

658. Here at Headquarters, work has continued during the period under review to address some of peace-keeping's institutional shortcomings. The difficulties in deploying peace-keepers quickly continues to be a matter of great concern. The General Assembly has urged me to develop a rapidly deployable headquarters team composed of personnel skilled in military and civilian headquarters functions. In response, the Secretariat has worked closely with interested delegations in planning towards this end, and we hope that work in this area, already well advanced, will yield tangible results very shortly. Similarly, in response to the Assembly's recommendations, I have made proposals to enhance the preparedness for conflict prevention and peace-keeping in Africa. I count on the continuing support of Member States in the implementation of these proposals. On a related question, efforts to develop further the standby arrangement system have made significant progress. However, there is still considerable scope for improvement and I should like to encourage all Member States to participate.

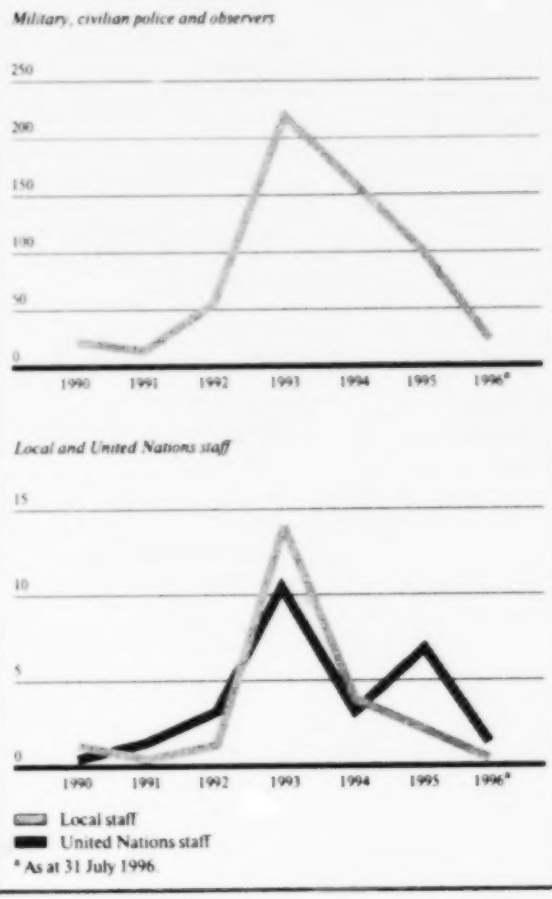
659. Member States and the Secretariat have been working to devise means of coping with lower revenues in the support account for peace-keeping operations, which funds a large majority of the posts that enable the Secretariat to set up, manage and support operations. My proposals with respect to staffing and funding the account

Figure 18
Civilian personnel in peace-keeping missions, 1995 and 1996



1 Local (1995 - 4288, 1996 - 4907)
2 International (1995 - 2124, 1996 - 2246)
3 Contractual (1995 - 1572, 1996 - 224)
4 United Nations Volunteers (1995 - 79, 1996 - 37)
5 Temporary (1995 - 228)

Figure 19
Total fatalities in peace-keeping operations, 1990-1996



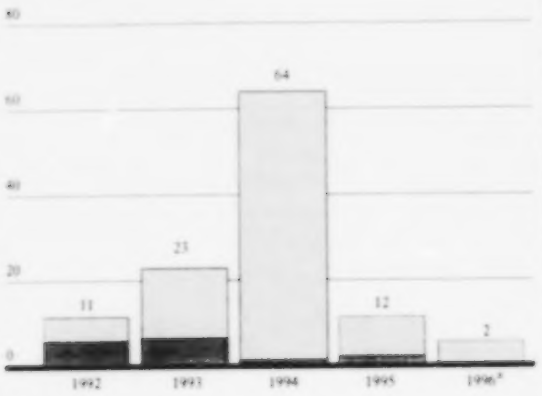
have found wide support from the Member States. While these proposals entailed painful cuts, they were designed to preserve the structural integrity of the Department, which, with the active involvement of Member States, has been so carefully constructed over the last few years.

660. The financial crisis of the Organization has hit troop contributors particularly hard, for it has not been possible to reimburse them in a timely manner. The result is absurd: our reward to countries, including some of the world's poorest, that send their sons and daughters into harm's way on behalf of the international community is to impose an added financial burden on them. Troop contributors are in effect financing the shortfalls that result when some Member States fail to pay their assessed contributions on time and in full.

661. The past year reaffirmed two key lessons derived from peace-keeping operations. Firstly, every operation, and especially an operation being sent into circumstances in which it is likely to face hostile action, should be deployed with the strength necessary to achieve the tasks entrusted to it and to protect itself. Otherwise, the credibility of the Organization — especially of the Security Council — and the safety of its personnel will be jeopardized. Secondly, no instrument for peace and security can bring about a lasting peace without the will of the parties to the conflict to achieve peace. Such a peace is in sight only when the parties come to a good-faith agreement by which they are all willing to abide. In the effort of the international community to help the parties reach such an agreement, positive incentives are often more appropriate and ultimately more effective than coercion.

662. A United Nations peace-keeping operation provides one such incentive by contributing to a climate of confidence. In my view, to strengthen United Nations capacity in this respect, when a United Nations operation is deployed to an area devastated by conflict, the chief of mission (usually a special representative of the Secretary-General) should be given the capacity to provide some direct, albeit modest, development assistance to those affected. In the few cases in which United Nations operations have had resources for such a purpose, the assistance has proved valuable in its own right and has also served as an important element in the mission's overall success. In Mozambique, for example, a small trust fund utilized by my Special Representative made an enormous difference in helping the United Nations Operation in Mozambique bring its efforts to the successful conclusion that I reported last year. More recently, the absence of such a tool in post-genocide Rwanda hampered the effectiveness of my Special Representative in that country.

Figure 20
Fatalities of United Nations civilian personnel, 1992-1996



* As at 31 July 1996, includes civilian staff serving in peace-keeping operations

D. Current activities in preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping

1. Afghanistan

663. The Special Mission, established by the General Assembly by its resolution 48/208, worked hard during the period under review to find a solution to this prolonged conflict. However, United Nations efforts have so far been hampered by the lack of political will among the Afghan factions to agree to a power-sharing accord and by a noticeable rise in interference by outside Powers in the internal matters of Afghanistan.

664. When the Head of the Special Mission, Mahmoud Mestiri, returned to the region in September 1995, the atmosphere in Afghanistan was one of war. In view of this alarming situation, I instructed Mr. Mestiri to do his utmost to pursue two objectives: (a) an agreement among the major warring factions for an immediate cease-fire, with each party maintaining its positions and territory occupied at the time of the cease-fire; and (b) immediately thereafter, the launching of serious negotiations among the parties for the transfer of power by President Burhanuddin Rabbani. In pursuit of those goals, Mr. Mestiri shuttled repeatedly between various cities in Afghanistan for meetings with Afghan leaders. He also travelled to the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan to consult senior government officials there. However, differences remained among the warring factions on the proposal for a cease-fire.

665. Following consultations with Mr. Mestiri, President Rabbani on 6 November 1995 announced publicly his willingness to transfer power to an individual or commission and proposed that the warring factions and a number of neutral personalities should sit together, under United Nations mediation, to agree on a suitable mechanism and date for the transfer of power. However, any progress in the peace talks was overtaken by the deterioration of the situation on the ground in late November, when intensive fighting broke out around Kabul between government forces and the Taliban. Mr. Mestiri departed from the region on 26 November to report to me in New York.

666. The Special Mission resumed its activities on 12 January 1996, when Mr. Mestiri arrived in the region with the renewed mandate of the General Assembly. While he undertook an extensive round of consultations with Afghan leaders and with Governments concerned, Kabul remained under siege by the Taliban. The forces of the Taliban and the Government were in a military stalemate, punctuated by occasional outbursts of fierce fighting. Indiscriminate exchanges of missiles and aerial bombardment were reported on an almost daily basis. This situation considerably hindered the United Nations-led peace process. I made frequent appeals to the Afghan parties for the immediate cessation of hostilities and for unconditional recourse to peaceful dialogue.

667. During the period under review, I submitted two progress reports to the General Assembly, on 3 April and 16 July 1996, respectively. In the latter report, I observed that the objectives of a durable cease-fire and a peaceful transfer of power, mandated by the Assembly and vigorously sought by the Special Mission, were still far from being achieved. The warring parties' preference to pursue their objectives by military means rather than peaceful negotiation appeared deep and enduring. Although intra-Afghan talks were to be welcomed, they had not yet brought the principal warring parties and others to the negotiating table. Meanwhile, the people of Afghanistan, who had repeatedly demonstrated to the Special Mission their desire for peace, continued to suffer. Nor had there been any decline in foreign interference, which continued to hamper the search for a political settlement. I concluded that, in these circumstances, there was clearly a need for an impartial third party to help the Afghan leaders resolve their differences and to encourage the neighbouring countries and others to work together to support that effort. That was, and remains, the role of the United Nations and its Special Mission.

668. On 24 May 1996, Mr. Mestiri informed me that he was obliged to resign for health reasons. I accepted his resignation, effective at the end of May, with regret, while paying tribute to the manner in which he had carried out his difficult mandate. I subsequently appointed Norbert Heinrich Holl to head the Special Mission, with effect from 7 July. Mr. Holl is based in Jalalabad pending the return of the Special Mission to Kabul.

669. In order to strengthen the Special Mission and to rationalize the Organization's political presence in Afghanistan, I decided that with effect from the end of June the Office of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan should cease to exist. All United Nations peacemaking activities in Afghanistan are now integrated into the Special Mission.

670. Afghanistan is one of the world's "forgotten" emergencies or "orphan" conflicts. In October 1995, I requested the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs to include Afghanistan in his visits to a number of areas of humanitarian crisis. Upon his return, the United Nations launched a consolidated inter-agency appeal for emergency humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance to Afghanistan, requesting $124 million to cover the period from October 1995 to September 1996. The programme, coordinated by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan, focuses on assistance for internally displaced persons, mine clearance, voluntary repatriation, food aid and emergency interventions in the fields of agriculture, health, human resource development and physical infrastructure.

671. In November 1995, restrictions were announced by the authorities in some parts of Afghanistan on the education of girls and the employment of women. United Nations agencies agreed that support for education programmes should be suspended in areas where girls were denied access.

672. The winter of 1995/96 was particularly difficult in Kabul. Harsh winter weather, rapid price increases, temporary blockades of the city and constant rocketing exacerbated already widespread suffering. United Nations agencies worked with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and non-governmental organizations to implement an emergency winter relief plan, under which over one third of the city's population benefited from the distribution of emergency food aid and relief supplies. Conscious of the importance of promoting and strengthening the links between humanitarian assistance and longer-term rehabilitation activities, representatives of United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and donor Governments met at Islamabad on 26 June 1996. They reviewed coordination and collaboration mechanisms, developed strategies for resource mobilization and discussed links between humanitarian and development assistance.

2. Angola

673. Despite numerous delays, some modest success has been achieved over the past year in the implementation of the provisions of the Lusaka Protocol. Provided that both the Government and the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) continue to show good will and refrain from engaging in any activities that may lead to further hostilities, the limited progress achieved may be consolidated further so that the Angolan people may at last enjoy the stable peace that is so badly needed to pursue the country's social and economic development.

674. My Special Representative, Alioune Blondin Beye, with the full support of the three observer States (Portugal, the Russian Federation and the United States of America), continued his efforts to persuade the parties to implement the agreements they have entered into. On several occasions, I had direct contacts with the leaders of the Government and UNITA in order to keep the peace process from stalling. The United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III), with an average of over 7,200 military and civilian personnel, is currently the Organization's largest peace-keeping operation. Six infantry battalions from Brazil, India, Romania, Uruguay, Zambia and Zimbabwe are present in the country. In addition to the six regional headquarters, UNAVEM III military and police observers are deployed in some 60 sites throughout Angola.

675. The Joint Commission, the principal body charged with monitoring the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol, has held regular and extraordinary sessions to review the various aspects of the peace process. It usually meets at Luanda, but it has also held sessions in several other Angolan cities. The Commission, which is chaired by my Special Representative, has established a number of ad hoc committees as well as a follow-up mechanism that meets on a daily basis at head-of-delegation level. An Armed Conflict Prevention Group including high-ranking military representatives of the two parties was also formed to prevent cease-fire violations or quickly control their consequences.

676. Since the Lusaka Protocol was signed on 20 November 1994, President José Eduardo dos Santos and the UNITA leader, Jonas Savimbi, have met four times outside Angola. However, the expectations raised by the signing of the Protocol and the meetings between the two Angolan leaders remain largely unfulfilled. The Government of National Unity and Reconciliation has not been formed. Designated UNITA officials have not joined the state administration at national, provincial and local levels, and most UNITA members of parliament have not resumed their functions in the National Assembly. Moreover, it is not yet clear whether Mr. Savimbi will respond positively

to the formal invitation he received from President dos Santos at Libreville on 1 March 1996 to assume one of the two posts of Vice-President.

677. The military talks, which should have been completed shortly after the signing of the Lusaka Protocol, continue to proceed at a very sluggish pace. It was not until the second half of September 1995 that UNITA sent a high-level military delegation led by its Chief of Staff to begin discussions with the Government on the incorporation of UNITA troops into the Angolan Armed Forces. Despite several partial agreements and the adoption by the National Assembly of amendments to the amnesty law that would enable the return of UNITA generals to the Angolan Armed Forces, the negotiations on the incorporation of UNITA troops and on the creation of a "fourth branch" of the service, which would perform functions in support of rehabilitation of the national infrastructure, are yet to be successfully concluded.

678. Another crucial provision of the Lusaka Protocol that has not been fully implemented is the quartering of UNITA troops in some 15 sites throughout the country. During the summer and autumn of 1995, UNAVEM III began setting up the quartering areas. Several of them were ready by early November, allowing the quartering process to be launched officially on 20 November, the first anniversary of the signing of the Protocol. The quartering of UNITA troops started in Huambo province and was extended in December to three additional sites, but for some time the number of soldiers arriving at the quartering areas remained very low. The age of some UNITA soldiers was a further source of concern.

679. While the Security Council made several appeals for the Government and UNITA to expedite the resolution of these issues, a shooting incident in October at the Luanda residence of the UNITA Chief of Staff resulted in a serious setback. UNITA viewed the incident as an assassination attempt and withdrew its military delegation from the Angolan capital. In the meantime, the issue of the repatriation of mercenaries, that is, expatriate military and security personnel employed by the parties (in particular by the Government), continued to present an additional obstacle. Small-scale violations of the cease-fire persisted. There were also indications that the Government was preparing military operations, but these potentially destabilizing actions were not carried out at that time.

680. The deployment of UNAVEM III was almost completed by the end of 1995, with the induction of approximately 7,000 troops and military observers, 240 police observers and various civilian staff stationed in some 60 locations throughout the country. The UNAVEM III presence and the good offices it provides to the parties, at both the local and high political levels, have helped to stabilize and improve the military situation and to achieve a measure of success in implementing the provisions of the Lusaka Protocol.

681. The role played by the United Nations civilian police observers has become increasingly important. This component facilitated the start of the quartering of the Government's rapid reaction police by the end of 1995. The UNAVEM civilian police observers also prepared comprehensive proposals for the disarmament of the civilian population, which began in July 1996, and played an important role in monitoring security arrangements for UNITA leaders in Luanda.

682. The civilian police have been instrumental, together with the UNAVEM III human rights unit, in close monitoring and, as necessary, investigation of alleged human rights violations. This issue continued to be of particular concern to the United Nations, owing to widespread human rights abuses — including abductions, unlawful detentions and torture — perpetrated against civilians by armed elements of both sides. The human rights unit has launched a nationwide programme to disseminate basic information on human rights and has organized a series of training workshops and seminars in Luanda and in some provincial capitals.

683. In spite of all efforts to keep the peace process moving forward, another setback occurred towards the end of 1995 when the Angolan Armed Forces launched a military offensive, taking control of several locations near the oil-producing region of Soyo in the northern province of Zaire. In response to that offensive, UNITA announced the suspension of the quartering of its troops, although the process had barely started. It also imposed restrictions on the movement of United Nations and other international personnel in some areas. UNITA cooperation with UNAVEM III deteriorated markedly and in early January 1996 I telephoned Mr. Savimbi to express my strong concern over the unsatisfactory situation.

684. The lack of tangible progress in implementation of the Lusaka Protocol prompted the international community to increase pressure on the parties. A breakthrough was achieved when President dos Santos fulfilled pledges he had made during his visit to Washington, D.C., in December 1995, in particular to withdraw government troops from recently recaptured areas, to terminate contracts with the firm Executive Outcomes, which had been providing the Government with expatriate military and security support personnel, to start the quartering of the rapid reaction police and to undertake several other important tasks. As a result of the efforts of my Special Representative and representatives of the three observer States, the Angolan parties agreed at that time to a definitive cessation of all military activities, the conclusion of military talks, the

release of prisoners, an end to hostile propaganda, the resumption of quartering of UNITA troops and the withdrawal of the Angolan Armed Forces to nearest barracks.

685. A new timetable for the implementation of these understandings was approved in January 1996. The Security Council, in letters addressed on 16 January to both Angolan leaders by its President, once again underscored the growing impatience of the international community. Also in January, the parties established an Armed Conflict Prevention Group, which has been operating in Luanda under United Nations auspices, and the UNITA delegation returned to the Angolan capital to resume negotiations on the integration of its troops into the Angolan Armed Forces. Several important decisions were reached in this regard, but crucial details could not be finalized.

686. On 19 January, more than one year after the signing of the Lusaka Protocol, Mr. Savimbi finally pledged that 16,500 troops out of the declared number of 62,500 UNITA military personnel would report to quartering areas by 8 February. This goal was accomplished slightly later than the deadline, but immediately thereafter the process again halted. It then continued in fits and starts, mostly in response to pressure from the Security Council when renewal of the mandate of UNAVEM III was under review. Many aspects of the quartering process have continued to cause serious concern; reports were received of forced "recruitment" for quartering and the quality and quantity of weapons being surrendered by UNITA troops were not satisfactory. Despite extensive advance preparations, the cantonment process presented UNAVEM III with a major logistical challenge and required substantial assistance from the donor community. Although UNITA registered complaints, conditions in the camps were determined to be adequate and the security situation remained calm.

687. By February-March, the number of cease-fire violations had dropped considerably, with only minor incidents in diamond-producing areas where UNITA retained control over some mines and in the provinces of Benguela and Huíla, where acts of banditry, cattle rustling and attacks against villages by elements of both UNITA and government forces persisted. During that period, several United Nations personnel, including unarmed military observers, were attacked, evoking strong condemnation by the Security Council.

688. At the fourth and most recent meeting between President dos Santos and Mr. Savimbi, held at Libreville on 1 March, the two leaders agreed on a number of measures, which, if implemented, could significantly advance the peace process. Among such measures were the completion of the formation of the Angolan Armed Forces by June and the establishment, by the following month, of a Government of National Unity and Reconciliation. To that end, President dos Santos presented to Mr. Savimbi a formal invitation to assume one of the two posts of Vice-President, while the UNITA leader handed to the Head of State of Angola a list of the UNITA members expected to join the future Government. With regard to elections, Mr. Savimbi agreed with the understandings reached in 1995 according to which, after the formation of the Government of National Unity and Reconciliation, the National Assembly would extend its mandate.

689. By March and April 1996, the quartering of the Government's rapid reaction police had reached an advanced stage, and by the end of June it was completed, with over 5,500 men assembled in 13 locations. The process was closely monitored by UNAVEM III civilian police observers, who conducted regular roll-calls, verified stored weapons and provided the police with extensive training. At the same time, withdrawal of the government troops from forward positions proceeded, albeit with some difficulties.

690. In mid-May, Mr. Savimbi pledged to my Special Representative that a total of 50,000 UNITA troops would be quartered by 15 June and that the entire process would be completed by the end of June. He also promised that UNITA troops would hand over "bigger and better" weapons to the United Nations. By the end of July, 57,000 UNITA troops had been quartered, although some 8,000 of these had subsequently deserted. Also by this time, UNITA began to hand over to UNAVEM large quantities of ammunition and heavy weapons stored in the northern and southern regions.

691. On 8 May, a new Amnesty Law was promulgated by President dos Santos. This removed one of the main obstacles to the conclusion of the talks on military matters. The pace of quartering of UNITA troops accelerated and the second phase of the withdrawal of government forces to barracks began. A revised and ambitious timetable for the incorporation of UNITA personnel into the Angolan Armed Forces was also approved, calling for the completion of all practical arrangements for incorporation (to be verified by the United Nations) by the end of July. Active preparations for the demobilization of those UNITA and Angolan Armed Forces personnel who would not join the integrated armed forces and the disarmament of the civilian population are under way and troops of both parties have started joint patrolling of major roads to encourage the free circulation of persons and goods throughout the country. By July, the release of prisoners by both sides, with the assistance of ICRC, had been completed.

692. Throughout the reporting period, the Security Council has played a vital role in sustaining and supporting the Angolan peace process, focusing the two parties on the

need to expedite the implementation of the provisions of the Lusaka Protocol and subsequent agreements and drawing their attention to the international community's impatience at the slow progress and constant delays in implementation of the agreements. In order to underline this message to the parties and to convince them that delaying tactics would not be tolerated, the Council extended the mandate of UNAVEM III for short periods only. On several occasions, I myself expressed in reports to the Council my strong dissatisfaction at the slow pace of the peace process and personally urged the leaders of the parties to accelerate it. This sustained pressure has helped to ensure the progress achieved, as described above, but all signs indicate that it will continue to be necessary during the coming months.

693. With the improvement of the military and political situation in the beginning of 1996, including the significant decrease in the number of cease-fire violations, mine clearance and the rehabilitation of roads and bridges intensified. This has enabled most humanitarian relief supplies to be transported by land and to reach many areas that were previously inaccessible. As the peace process advances, the focus of United Nations assistance is gradually shifting from emergency relief activities to rehabilitation of the country's war-damaged economic and social infrastructure and to long-term development. The focus of food aid, for example, is moving from general distribution to targeted assistance and food-for-work programmes. A successful seed and tool distribution programme was carried out during November 1995, but its impact will be diminished in some areas by insufficient rainfall.

694. Under the coordination of the Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, humanitarian organizations have continued to provide assistance to a large number of displaced and other war-affected persons. UNAVEM III military contingents, on a voluntary basis, have undertaken a variety of humanitarian projects, such as the running of temporary clinics and primary schools. Vocational training schools have also been opened by some contingents to prepare young men to earn a livelihood.

695. Despite these improvements, humanitarian assistance will be required for many months to come. Some populations remain isolated because of local insecurity and logistical constraints; their condition is likely to be deteriorating and they will require emergency assistance once they are accessible. Moreover, flare-ups of fighting and difficult relations with local authorities have intermittently set back relief efforts.

696. In April, an updated inter-agency consolidated appeal for Angola was launched calling for $187 million to meet the needs in 1996 of an estimated 2.7 million conflict-affected and internally displaced persons, 200,000 returning refugees, 100,000 former soldiers and other ex-combatants and up to 400,000 of their dependants.

697. The long-term prospects for peace in Angola depend in large part on the successful demobilization and reintegration into civilian life of those combatants who are not retained in the Angolan Armed Forces. The first phase of the demobilization programme, which started in November 1995, involved registration, food assistance, health care and basic education for UNITA soldiers. Assistance is also provided to the soldiers' families and communities near the quartering areas. This is a collaborative effort of United Nations agencies and international and local non-governmental organizations, with coordination provided by the Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit. In order to deal with the related issues in a comprehensive manner, a special technical working group was set up under the aegis of the United Nations. My Special Representative focused particular attention on securing the necessary international assistance for this vital effort.

3. Nagorny Karabakh region of Azerbaijan

698. The conflict over the Nagorny Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, which involves that country and Armenia, is the longest-lasting inter-ethnic dispute amongst the independent States of the former Soviet Union. Despite the efforts of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which was established by the OSCE summit at Budapest in December 1994 and which has the leading peacemaking role in the region, a comprehensive solution to the conflict has not yet been reached. Nevertheless, over the last year the Finnish and Russian Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group have actively pursued measures to move the peace process forward. They have convened regular Minsk Group meetings with and without the parties to the conflict and have undertaken a number of missions to the region to conduct negotiations at the highest levels. In addition, the current Chairman-in-Office of OSCE, the Foreign Minister of Switzerland, visited Baku and Yerevan to discuss a "Framework of a Package Solution" proposal prepared by the Minsk Group Co-Chairmen.

699. The parties to the conflict have consistently reiterated that they remain committed to a peaceful solution. This commitment was confirmed in the beginning of May 1996, when the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, Yevgeny Primakov, visited the region and helped facilitate the exchange of all remaining prisoners of

war. This important humanitarian step had been sought by the Minsk Group for some time and was regarded as a further confidence-building measure that should help overcome the stalled negotiations on the Framework of a Package Solution.

700. I welcome the fact that the cease-fire in the region, which came into effect on 12 May 1994 following mediation efforts by the Russian Federation in cooperation with the Minsk Group, has continued to be observed by all sides. However, in the absence of a political solution, large areas of Azerbaijan remain occupied by ethnic Armenian forces. In addition, hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons have not been able to return to their places of origin.

701. The Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk process have kept the Security Council and me, through the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, regularly informed of progress in the peace process. In September 1995, in support of the OSCE efforts, I sent a goodwill mission to the region, headed by Under-Secretary-General Aldo Ajello. The four Co-Chairmen came to Headquarters on 16 April 1996 to brief the Security Council during informal consultations. On that occasion, the members of the Council strongly reiterated their support for the peace efforts of the Minsk Group. I, too, continue to support those efforts and remain prepared to provide technical assistance for the OSCE peace-keeping operation whose deployment is planned once a political agreement has been reached under OSCE auspices.

4. Burundi

702. The situation in Burundi has continued to be of major concern to me. My Special Representative, Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, who had actively promoted national reconciliation since October 1993, concluded his term of office at the end of October 1995. On 22 December, I appointed Marc Faguy as his successor. Since assuming his responsibilities, Mr. Faguy has pursued efforts to bring about a dialogue among all political parties, in cooperation with the former President of the United Republic of Tanzania, Julius K. Nyerere, whose efforts are also supported by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the European Union (EU).

703. In my report to the General Assembly of 11 October 1995, I expressed the hope that a national debate, planned for November-December 1995, would help the parties move from confrontation and violence towards peace and reconciliation. Regrettably, the debate did not take place, though in April 1996 the Government initiated internal discussions to prepare for it. Many in Burundi believed that it was the appropriate mechanism for a wide-ranging political dialogue. Others, however, considered it difficult to conduct such a debate in the dangerous security conditions that currently prevailed.

704. After early March 1996, developments took a turn for the worse and the influence of moderate political forces continued to diminish. Armed Hutu bands, led by the former Minister of the Interior, Leonard Nyangoma, President of the Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie, became increasingly active and Tutsi civilians were often victims of their attacks. In responding to those attacks the Army itself caused large numbers of Hutu civilian casualties. Political assassinations continued, including the murder of two Hutu Members of Parliament and two Governors of the northern Ngozi province. Members of the international relief community were also the targets of violence. As a result, ICRC, the World Food Programme (WFP) and other non-governmental organizations involved in humanitarian assistance either terminated or suspended their much-needed operations in northern Burundi. In that context, five days after the massacre on 20 July of over 300 displaced Burundians, the Army announced a military takeover and named the former President, Major Pierre Buyoya, as the new President of Burundi.

705. Throughout the period under review, the Security Council remained seized of the issue and was regularly briefed on developments. I repeatedly called on the Council and the international community to plan for the possibility that the threat of a humanitarian disaster might necessitate an emergency operation by the international community. On 29 December 1995, I addressed a letter to the President of the Security Council, recalling the proposals for preventive action I had made on 19 August 1994 and repeated in my report of 11 October 1994. I asked the Council to give renewed consideration to my proposals to maintain a military presence in Zaire, subject to its Government's agreement, which would be capable of rapid intervention if the situation in Burundi suddenly deteriorated.

706. I also asked the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, to travel to Bujumbura as my Special Envoy to see what measures could be taken to address the issue of insecurity and allow humanitarian organizations to function effectively. Following her visit, from 7 to 9 January 1996, the situation eased and the humanitarian organizations, which had left Burundi for security reasons, returned to continue their work. However, the overall situation remained threatening.

707. Upon her return, my Special Envoy made recommendations concerning the security situation in Burundi. In my letter of 16 January to the President of the Security Council, I summarized her findings and recommendations, which included sending a technical

mission to Burundi to review the possible role United Nations guards could play in providing enhanced security to the humanitarian community. Further to that letter and to the Council's endorsement of the Special Envoy's recommendations, I dispatched a technical mission to Bujumbura on 27 January.

708. As the situation remained serious, the Security Council in its resolution 1040 (1996) of 29 January requested me, in consultation with OAU and Member States concerned, to consider further preventive steps, to develop contingency plans as appropriate and to submit a full report on the results of the technical mission and on contingency planning. In my report of 15 February, I again called on the Council to take resolute action and again expressed my fear that the rekindled tensions in Burundi could escalate into full-scale war, ethnic violence and genocide.

709. Regarding the deployment of United Nations security guards, the technical mission concluded that, in the context of violence and instability prevailing at that time, they would not be able to guarantee the security of humanitarian personnel in Burundi. Accordingly, I saw little point in pursuing such an option at that time but decided to keep it open in the hope that the situation would improve.

710. As for contingency planning, I believed it useful at that stage to consider the possibility of establishing, under Chapter VII of the Charter, a standby multinational force for humanitarian intervention. The proposed force, I suggested, could be led by one Member State and be given a mandate to deter massacres, to provide security to refugees, displaced persons and civilians at risk and to protect key economic installations. Consultations by a group of countries with a proven rapid deployment capacity, including some African countries, could be undertaken with a view to earmarking contingents for participation in such a force. Those contingents would remain in their respective countries but would be fully trained and equipped so as to be ready for deployment at very short notice.

711. I also saw some merit in deploying in advance in one of the neighbouring countries, as suggested in my letter to the Security Council of 29 December, a force that would strengthen the rapid deployment capability of a multinational force. Once the situation in Burundi stabilized, the responsibility could be transferred to a United Nations peace-keeping operation established under Chapter VI of the Charter, which would maintain the stability established by the multinational operation and would help reactivate the political reconciliation process.

712. On 14 February, I met with OAU Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim, with whom I remained in close contact throughout the period under review, and outlined to him the proposals for preventive deployment that I later made to the Security Council. Mr. Salim believed that, while priority should be given to the political option, African countries would, in the event of a dramatic deterioration of the situation, support a humanitarian intervention aimed at preventing the type of disaster that had been experienced in Rwanda. In keeping with that approach, OAU on 13 April extended by three months the mandate of its observer mission, notwithstanding its financial difficulties and the restrictions placed by the Burundian authorities on the mission's freedom of movement.

713. The Security Council, in its resolution 1049 (1996) of 5 March, encouraged me to continue my consultations on contingency planning with Member States concerned and OAU, as appropriate. The Council requested that I intensify preparations for a regional conference for peace, security and development, to address the issue of political and economic stability in the countries of the Great Lakes region. I was further requested to report to the Council on the possibility of establishing a United Nations radio station in Burundi in order to promote reconciliation and dialogue, to relay constructive information and to support the activities undertaken by United Nations agencies, in particular with regard to refugees and returnees.

714. Meanwhile, my Special Representative continued to send alarming information. In my letter to the Security Council of 12 April, I again drew the attention of the Council to the threatening developments in Burundi, including the differences of view between President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya and Prime Minister Antoine Nduwayo on the issue of negotiating with the Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie. While the President expressed his readiness to talk with Mr. Nyangoma on condition that his armed bands renounced violence, the Prime Minister still accused him of planning a genocide against the Tutsi population and refused to meet with him.

715. When I reported to the Council on 3 May, I stressed that the vicious circle of violence in Burundi could be broken only if moderates on both sides worked together to create a genuine and effective coalition government. On my instructions, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, during a visit to Burundi on 24 and 25 April, had emphasized to all his interlocutors my support for President Nyerere and my conviction that there could be no military solution and that a political settlement had to be reached through negotiation. I also emphasized the need for urgent action if the country was not to be overwhelmed by uncontrolled violence. I had reaffirmed those points in personal letters to President Ntibantunganya and to Prime Minister Nduwayo, sent by hand of my Special

Representative after my meeting with him at Nairobi on 30 April.

716. Pursuant to paragraph 13 of resolution 1049 (1996), I undertook wide-ranging and intensive consultations with interested Member States and with OAU on contingency planning. I remained convinced of the necessity for the international community to consider military intervention to save lives, should disaster strike Burundi and lead to large-scale killings of civilians. During his visit to Burundi, the Under-Secretary-General stressed that my plan was envisaged only in the event of a disaster situation and would be purely for humanitarian purposes. One measure that the Secretariat was urged to take, and which lay within its capacity, was to draw up plans for a possible peace-keeping operation under Chapter VI of the Charter, to be deployed in the event that the parties reached political agreement and asked the United Nations to help them implement it. Meanwhile the planning of such an operation was already under way.

717. The Member States consulted agreed that contingency planning for other eventualities, including a worst-case scenario, should also proceed. However, no country volunteered to take the lead in planning, deploying and commanding such a multinational operation. The need for further consultations to proceed in a discreet and confidential manner was stressed.

718. The Member States consulted believed that the idea of a regional conference on peace, security and development in the Great Lakes region should be retained. My own view was that all interested countries would have to agree to participate in the conference before concrete preparations for its convening could start; however, at that time, two countries of the region remained reluctant to participate.

719. As for the establishment of a United Nations radio station in Burundi, a technical mission of the Departments of Political Affairs, Public Information and Peace-keeping Operations visited Bujumbura from 15 to 21 April to explore this possibility. The mission concluded that it might be technically possible but that the volatile situation in Burundi argued against such a highly visible and politically sensitive United Nations project.

720. While I continued consultations with OAU and Member States on contingency planning, former President Nyerere continued actively to promote a dialogue among all political parties. From 22 to 26 April, he organized a substantive meeting at Mwanza, United Republic of Tanzania, in which only he and the leaders of the majority party, the Front pour la démocratie au Burundi, and the main opposition party, the Union pour le progrès national, Jean Minani and Charles Mukasi, respectively, took part.

721. Prior to that meeting, 12 political parties that had signed the 1994 Convention of Government, together with the Parti pour le redressement national of former President Jean-Baptiste Bagaza, which had not signed the Convention, and a recently established party, the Alliance des Vaillants, accepted President Nyerere's invitation to meet on 21 April in an informal get-together. His invitation was not extended to the Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie, as the Government still refused to talk with Mr. Nyangoma. These talks ended inconclusively and the parties could not agree to sign a draft joint statement prepared by President Nyerere. It was agreed, however, to meet again at Mwanza on 22 May. My Special Representative, the Special Envoy of EU, Aldo Ajello, and the Representative of OAU in Burundi, Léandre Bassolé, were invited to attend.

722. ICRC estimated that from February to May more than 100,000 people were displaced as a result of fighting. On 9 May, the number of newly registered Burundian refugees, forced to flee by new clashes between the Army and Hutu rebels in the north-west province of Cibitoke, rose to 13,000 despite the fact that the Burundi-Zaire border was closed. In late April, two massacres of some 200 civilians each were reported to have taken place in the central Burundian village of Buhoro and in Kivyuka, in the north-eastern province of Bubanza. The Buhoro incident was investigated by three United Nations human rights observers and by a commission of inquiry set up by the Burundi National Security Council on 9 May. On 15 May, the commission published a report, estimating that 118 people had been killed and that the killers were probably Hutu rebels or refugees.

723. Having considered my report of 3 May, the Security Council issued a presidential statement on 15 May strongly condemning any use of violence and emphasizing its conviction that a lasting settlement could only be found through peaceful means. The Council requested me and Member States concerned to continue to facilitate, as a matter of urgency, contingency planning for a rapid humanitarian response in the event of widespread violence or a serious deterioration in the humanitarian situation in Burundi. The Council also encouraged me further to pursue planning for steps that might be taken to support a possible political agreement.

724. I continued consultations regarding contingency planning with Member States. On 23 May, the Secretariat approached 86 Member States concerning their readiness to participate in a peace-keeping operation under Chapter VI and by early August had received 14 positive and 6 negative replies. Twenty-two African States had been approached concerning their willingness to contribute troops to a multinational humanitarian intervention force to be authorized by the Security Council under Chapter VII, of

which three had responded positively and four negatively. At the same time, 25 potential donor countries in Europe, Asia and North America had been approached for assistance in providing logistics, communications, transportation and equipment for a Chapter VII operation; 7 had declined and 7 had offered assistance, excluding ground troops.

725. In May the security situation continued to deteriorate steadily. On 4 June, three staff of ICRC were murdered in the province of Cibitoke. More massacres were reported throughout June and the first half of July, including the murder of 80 Tutsis at a tea factory in the north-west of the country.

726. Meanwhile, on 9 June, the Mwanza II meeting ended inconclusively. Determined to continue his efforts, President Nyerere scheduled Mwanza III for early July. He also scheduled, for 25 June, a regional summit at Arusha of the Heads of State of the region.

727. The regional summit took place as planned and was attended by the Presidents of the United Republic of Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda. Burundi was represented by the President and the Prime Minister, both of whom requested foreign security assistance. Their fragile alliance was broken after their return to Bujumbura, however, when, on 3 July, Prime Minister Nduwayo, in a letter, accused President Ntibantunganya of seeking to neutralize the Tutsi-dominated army and of having a hidden agenda with regard to the request for security assistance. Nevertheless, on 5 July, Burundi's National Security Council established a 21-member committee of military and civilian experts to discuss requirements for the implementation of the Arusha peace plan. The committee was to report to the international technical committee established at Arusha on 25 June to work out the logistics of the regional peace plan, which envisaged the deployment of troops from Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Ethiopia.

728. On 10 July, the OAU summit at Yaoundé expressed its support for the peace process initiated by President Nyerere at Mwanza and for the results of the Arusha regional summit of 25 June. However, some regional leaders questioned the usefulness of the plan and were worried by the persistent disagreement over it among the political parties in Burundi. The Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie rejected the plan from the beginning.

729. During the OAU summit I met with the President and the Prime Minister of Burundi. Both admitted that the situation was no longer tolerable. I felt that there was still hope for a national debate that could lead to a peaceful settlement. However, the President explained that he could only launch such a debate once security was established.

730. The security situation took a further turn for the worse on 20 July, when a massacre of over 300 displaced Burundians occurred in the Bugendana camp, in Burundi's central Gitega province. While the Burundi authorities claimed that the dead were Tutsis killed by the Hutu rebels of the armed wing of the Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie, the latter denied any role in the killings, claiming that the victims were Hutus killed by the soldiers of the Burundian army. No independent information was available on the identity of the perpetrators.

731. On 22 July, in a letter to the Security Council, I underlined, once again, the pressing need for the international community to take concrete and immediate action to halt the cycle of violence and to prevent another catastrophe from befalling the Great Lakes region of Central Africa. I had instructed the Department of Peace-keeping Operations to intensify its efforts with regard to contingency planning for humanitarian intervention by a multinational force.

732. In the wake of the massacre at Bugendana, the president of the Parti pour le redressement national, Mr. Bagaza, called for a two-day general strike in protest against the killings and the Arusha "security assistance" plan. As the Mwanza III talks began on 21 July, the main opposition party, the Union pour le progrès national, excused itself from the talks, saying that the Bugendana massacre did not allow its leaders to participate. On 24 July, the Union denounced the Convention on Governance of September 1994 and withdrew its support from the consensus built around President Ntibantunganya, accusing him of treason. While the army denied that a *coup d'état* was in progress, the President took refuge at the United States Embassy.

733. Reacting to these events, the Security Council issued a presidential statement on 24 July, in which it strongly condemned any attempt to overthrow the legitimate Government by force. The Council took note of my letter, condemned the Bugendana massacre, urged all parties to exercise restraint and requested the Burundi authorities to conduct a proper investigation of the massacre. The Council stressed its full support for the efforts of former President Nyerere, including the agreements reached at the Arusha regional summit of 25 June, and encouraged all parties to work in a constructive manner with Mr. Nyerere. The Council emphasized the importance of the continued cooperation of the United Nations with OAU, EU, the United States and other interested countries and organizations in coordination with former President Nyerere, aimed at achieving a comprehensive political dialogue between the parties in Burundi. The Council requested me and Member States concerned to continue to facilitate contingency planning for a rapid humanitarian

response in the event of widespread violence or a serious deterioration in the humanitarian situation in Burundi.

734. On 25 July, the army announced a military takeover, citing insecurity and the Government's inability to rule as reasons for this move, and named Major Buyoya as the new President. The Prime Minister resigned. The Minister of Defence announced the suspension of the National Assembly and of all political parties and political organizations, the prohibition of strikes and demonstrations and the closure of the country's borders and Bujumbura airport. On 26 July, Major Buyoya made public his intention to set up a transitional government that would reflect the reality in Burundi and urged the international community to refrain from military intervention in the country. Meanwhile President Ntibantunganya remained in the United States Ambassador's residence in Bujumbura.

735. Meanwhile, on 23 July the international commission of inquiry for Burundi completed its work and submitted its final report to me. I forwarded this report to the President of the Security Council so that the Council could consider what action to take on it.

736. In response to the Security Council's request to me in its presidential statement of 24 July to continue to facilitate contingency planning for a rapid humanitarian response in the event of widespread violence in Burundi, the Secretariat again approached some 30 potential troop contributors. In view of the fact that no lead country had emerged to plan and organize a multinational force and that there appeared to be confusion over who would finance such an operation, these troop contributors were asked if they would be prepared to consider participating in a United Nations operation in Burundi mandated by the Security Council and funded through assessed contributions. The aim of such an operation would be, in general terms, to improve security, by all possible means to deter attacks on civilians, especially refugees and displaced persons, to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance and to provide time for negotiations to pursue a viable political settlement. As of early August, four replies had been received. All were negative.

737. The cycle of inter-ethnic violence and political instability has severely undermined the economy of Burundi and compromised the country's ability to emerge from its crisis. In the agricultural sector, which traditionally has accounted for 90 per cent of total national revenues, major food shortages are projected because of the disruptions associated with the displacement of large agrarian communities. The widespread insecurity has also become an impediment to the effective delivery of assistance and implementation of humanitarian programmes. As a result of the general deterioration in the security environment, non-essential travel for all United Nations personnel from Makamba in the south to Muyinga in the north of the country was curtailed.

738. In November 1995, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator designated a Humanitarian Coordinator for Burundi to coordinate emergency relief activities of United Nations agencies and humanitarian organizations. During 1996, widespread insecurity became an impediment to the effective delivery and implementation of humanitarian assistance and led to the displacement of some 100,000 of the local population. Most recently, the humanitarian situation has been seriously affected by renewed fighting in the north-western provinces of Bubanza and Cibitoke, the outbreak of new fighting in the south, an increase in massacres of the civilian population and by the efforts to repatriate by force large numbers of Rwandan refugees in the north-east.

739. The spreading conflict and increasing difficulty faced by the government authorities in providing adequate security guarantees for the safety of humanitarian workers has seriously impinged on the ability of aid agencies to gain access to the most vulnerable populations. Targeted threats against humanitarian personnel have occurred regularly. In that context, ICRC was forced to suspend its activities and pull out of the country following the murder of three of its delegates in Cibitoke on 4 June and other threats to ICRC staff.

740. The prevailing insecurity has forced relief organizations to operate in a "stop and go" manner, which has militated against the adoption of a longer-term approach. Despite these constraints, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations have been largely successful in continuing to meet the most immediate relief needs of the victims of the conflict, albeit with great difficulty.

741. In that context, operational agencies of the United Nations system in Burundi have been engaged in an intense collaborative effort to develop contingency plans for emergency humanitarian operations in the country since the beginning of the year. The emergency operations plan for Burundi addresses a fundamental issue, namely, how United Nations agencies can function together to provide the maximum level of emergency assistance inside the country in the event of a serious escalation of the conflict.

742. In recognition of the country's growing humanitarian needs, a United Nations consolidated fund-raising appeal for the Great Lakes region was launched by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in February. A total of $50.9 million was requested for United Nations programmes to assist Burundi in the coming year. Furthermore, a specific document on financial requirements for Department coordination was sent to donors in January,

with a reminder in July, requesting their assistance in making up a shortfall in funds.

5. Cambodia

743. With the agreement of the Government of Cambodia, the mandate of my Representative in Cambodia was renewed for two further six-month periods in October 1995 and April 1996. He has continued to be assisted by a military adviser.

744. In accordance with his mandate, my Representative has maintained close liaison and dialogue with the Government and has worked in close contact with the various United Nations programmes and agencies operating in the country. Cooperation between the Government and the United Nations, along with the generous assistance of the international community, continues to reflect the spirit and principles of the Paris Agreements by helping the Government move towards greater prosperity and democratization. The successful implementation of the agreement reached in May 1995 for improved communication between the Government and the office of the United Nations Centre for Human Rights at Phnom Penh has been particularly welcome.

745. I have recently given a positive reply to a request by the Government of Cambodia that UNDP coordinate technical assistance for the forthcoming elections. These elections will be central to the strengthening of political pluralism in Cambodia.

6. Cameroon and Nigeria

746. The long-standing land and maritime border dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria over the Bakassi peninsula was exacerbated in December 1993 by the reported discovery of offshore oil deposits. In February 1994, after violent incidents in the region, the Government of Cameroon submitted the dispute to the ruling of the International Court of Justice.

747. Following mediation efforts initiated by President Gnassingbé Eyadema of the Togolese Republic, the Heads of State of the two countries met in Tunisia in June 1994. While tension was eased, the conflict remained unresolved, and on 3 and 4 February 1996 troops of the two sides clashed again. On 3 February, I called on both parties to show restraint and to withdraw their troops from the border areas to create the conditions necessary for a peaceful settlement of the dispute and to await the results of the deliberations by the International Court. On 17 February, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the two countries met at Kara, Togo, and agreed on a cease-fire.

748. In identical letters dated 29 February to the Heads of State of Cameroon and Nigeria, the President of the Security Council welcomed my proposal to send a fact-finding mission to the Bakassi peninsula and urged both Governments to cooperate fully with the proposed mission. The Council also called on Cameroon and Nigeria to respect the cease-fire they had agreed to at Kara, to refrain from further violence and to return their forces to the positions occupied in March 1994 before the dispute was referred to the International Court of Justice.

749. Under an interim ruling of 15 March, the Court ordered Cameroon and Nigeria to refrain from any military activity until it made a substantive ruling on the status of the peninsula. It ordered Cameroonian and Nigerian armed forces to withdraw to the positions they had occupied before the 3 February clashes and requested both parties to observe the agreement reached at Kara for the cessation of hostilities. The Court also called on both parties to provide full assistance to the proposed fact-finding mission.

750. On 24 March, the OAU Central Organ's Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution called on both countries to exercise restraint and to take appropriate measures to restore confidence, including withdrawal of troops and continuation of a dialogue.

751. On 24 May, I reported to the Security Council about the results of the consultations undertaken by my Special Envoy, Lakhdar Brahimi, on the proposed fact-finding mission to the Bakassi peninsula. The President of Cameroon informed Mr. Brahimi that his country would abide by any decision taken by the International Court of Justice and would welcome a fact-finding mission. The Head of State of Nigeria indicated his preference for a bilateral solution to the dispute and recognized that a United Nations fact-finding mission could help in that regard. Aware that the Court had urged the two countries to lend assistance to the proposed mission, he also accepted in principle the idea of such a mission and indicated that he would send his response to the Security Council and to me in writing.

752. In a letter dated 29 May, the President of the Council requested me to continue to keep the Council informed of the measures taken to monitor the situation in the Bakassi peninsula. I am now awaiting the formal approval of the Government of Nigeria to dispatch the fact-finding mission. In the meantime, the cease-fire seems to be holding, although some limited clashes have occurred.

7. Cyprus

753. During most of the past year, the impasse in the negotiating process continued to prevent my mission of

good offices, carried out within the overall framework set by the Security Council in its resolution 939 (1994), from proceeding as I would have wished. Only in June/July 1996 did it become possible to resume work on both the substance of the Cyprus problem and the implementation of the package of confidence-building measures.

754. In an informal meeting held in mid-April, the permanent members of the Security Council underlined the importance they attached to a comprehensive approach to a settlement of the Cyprus problem, on the basis of Council resolutions, high-level agreements and efforts by the Secretary-General and his Representatives. On 1 May, the Council endorsed the appointment of Han Sung-Joo, former Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea, as my new Special Representative for Cyprus, replacing Joe Clark, who had served since 1993.

755. In June 1996, I met separately with each of the Cypriot leaders in the hope of being able to confirm that they were both ready to resume direct talks on the basis of mutual acknowledgement of each side's concerns and a mutual willingness to compromise. These meetings did not lead to agreement on the early convening of direct talks, but they provided a basis on which I could instruct my Special Representative to pursue contacts with the parties in order to achieve such an agreement, taking into account the implications of likely developments in relations between Cyprus and EU. To that end, Professor Han visited the region in late June and early July and met with the Cypriot parties and the Governments of Greece and Turkey. He also travelled to Moscow, Paris, London, Dublin and Brussels for consultations with the Governments concerned, the Presidency of EU and European Commission officials. His consultations confirmed an increased interest on the part of the international community in finding a settlement of the Cyprus issue, which has been on the United Nations agenda since December 1963.

756. The United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) continued to monitor the cease-fire, where the overall situation remained calm. The two sides generally exercised restraint in the past year, although tension increased following the fatal shooting of a National Guard soldier in June. In response to this and in accordance with Security Council resolution 1062 (1996), I instructed UNFICYP vigorously to renew its efforts to reach agreement with the parties to take reciprocal measures to lower the tension along the buffer zone, including mutual commitments, through UNFICYP, not to deploy along the cease-fire lines live ammunition or weapons other than those which are hand-held, to prohibit firing of weapons within sight or hearing of the buffer zone and to extend without delay the 1989 unmanning agreement to all parts of the buffer zone where their forces remain in close proximity to each other.

757. The excessive levels of military forces, armaments and expenditures on both sides in Cyprus and the rate at which they are being expanded, upgraded and modernized are matters for grave concern. This situation only increases tension and the risk of confrontation along the cease-fire lines, lending further urgency to the need for progress in the negotiations for a lasting solution to the Cyprus problem.

8. East Timor

758. The Foreign Ministers of Indonesia and Portugal have continued their talks under my auspices with the aim of finding a just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution to the long-standing question of East Timor. At the seventh round of talks, held in London on 16 January 1996, the two sides resumed discussion of substantive issues that had been identified at the earlier round. At the eighth round, held at Geneva on 27 June, the substantive discussions were pursued in greater detail. Additional consultations at the diplomatic level are now being conducted with the aim of finding common ground to serve as the basis for a settlement of the issue. Despite differences of perspective and approach, the two Governments have been engaged in a serious and useful dialogue that has focused on short-term measures as well as on the longer-term issues.

759. I continue to consult a cross-section of East Timorese figures in the context of these talks. With the agreement of the two Governments, I facilitated a second meeting, from 19 to 22 March, of the All-inclusive Intra-East Timorese Dialogue, which, like the first meeting, was held at Burg Schlaining, Austria. Without addressing the issue of the status of East Timor, the 29 participants adopted a consensus declaration containing a number of practical ideas aimed at helping create an atmosphere conducive to a lasting solution. I am encouraged by the spirit of cooperation and compromise that the participants demonstrated and their interest in continuing this exercise. I am also encouraged by the desire of Indonesia and Portugal to implement proposals emerging from the Dialogue.

9. El Salvador

760. The peace process in El Salvador has continued its steady advance, despite the persistence of difficulties in implementation of some remaining items in the peace accords. The Mission of the United Nations in El Salvador (MINUSAL) continued to carry out its mandate of good offices and verification of compliance with the peace

accords in accordance with a programme of work signed by the parties on 27 April 1995. The programme of work indicated that implementation of some elements of the accords had yet to be accomplished in the areas of public security, the land transfer programme, human settlements, reinsertion programmes, the Fund for the Protection of the War-wounded and Disabled, and legal and constitutional reforms. Following the departure of my Special Representative, Enrique ter Horst (Venezuela), Ricardo Vigil was appointed my Representative and Director of MINUSAL on 1 October 1995.

761. On 6 October, I reported to the General Assembly that, although considerable advances had been made, a number of issues remained outstanding. Accordingly, the Assembly on 31 October approved my proposal to extend the mandate of the Mission for a further period of six months, until 30 April 1996. I later submitted an informal report to the Security Council (25 January 1996) and, on several occasions, dispatched a high-level envoy from Headquarters to hold meetings with the President and members of the Government, the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN) and other key political actors, and to assist the Mission in the discharge of its responsibilities.

762. I reported to the General Assembly on 23 April that progress had been registered in a number of areas of the peace accords: the titling process in the land transfer programme had experienced significant advances (although not the process of title registration); the quantifiable targets of other reinsertion programmes had largely been reached; and the individual items identified by the programme of work in the area of public security were nearing completion. The establishment, in January 1996, of a National Council on Public Security, in accordance with a recommendation of MINUSAL, was another positive development.

763. Yet some important aspects of implementation remained: the constitutional and legal reforms identified by the programme of work were stalled at different stages of the legislative process; the filing of transferred land titles in the national register, necessary for the completion of the programme, lagged far behind the process of titling; reforms in the public security sector were still not consolidated in accordance with the public security model developed by the accords (a weakness underscored by the passage in March 1996 of a substantially flawed emergency law designed to combat the country's alarming level of crime); and the transfer of the rural human settlements was not expected to be finalized at least until the end of the year.

764. Accordingly, I stated that in order to fulfil the Organization's responsibility under the peace accords to verify all aspects of their implementation, a continued presence in El Salvador was required, although not at the same level as MINUSAL, for a further period lasting until the end of 1996. I proposed, and the General Assembly subsequently approved, that the United Nations replace MINUSAL with a mechanism that would combine regular visits by a high-level envoy from Headquarters with the retention in the field of a small group of experts that would continue to work on matters of verification and good offices. The mechanism, the United Nations Office of Verification, began its operations on 1 May 1996.

765. In late July I again submitted an informal report to the Security Council, noting progress in some elements of implementation of the peace accords and persistent delays in others. Particularly welcome developments were the approval by the Legislative Assembly both of a package of constitutional reforms recommended by the Commission on the Truth and of the Police Career Law. Advances had also been achieved in the land transfer programme, in particular with respect to the filing of titles in the national register. However, there remained difficulties in the consolidation of the public security sector and I reported that the expectations raised by the establishment of the National Council on Public Security had so far not been met. Moreover, progress in the area of judicial reform had been minimal, further delays in the implementation of the programme to transfer the rural human settlements appeared likely and problems relating to the Fund for the Protection of the War-wounded and Disabled persisted.

10. Eritrea-Yemen

766. The dispute between Eritrea and Yemen over the Hanish archipelago in the Red Sea, which began in November 1995, has been another source of concern to the international community. In late December, I had the opportunity to discuss the situation with both parties during a visit to Asmara and Sanaa. Upon my return to Headquarters, I informed the Security Council of my view that both parties possessed the political will to resolve their territorial dispute by peaceful means and that I had recommended to them mediation by a Member State. I had also assured the parties that the Secretariat would be at their disposal should they so wish. France took the lead in mediation, which culminated on 21 May in the signing by the two parties of an agreement to settle their dispute through arbitration. It is my hope that the process of arbitration will soon be started, leading to a solution of this potentially very dangerous dispute. I wish to pay tribute to France, as well as to Egypt and Ethiopia, which also played an important role in the mediation process.

11. Georgia/Abkhazia

767. My Special Envoy for Georgia, Edouard Brunner, supported by the Russian Federation as facilitator and OSCE as participant, has continued to pursue a comprehensive settlement of the conflict. In order to strengthen the efforts of the United Nations and to ensure a continuous presence at a senior political level in the region, I appointed Liviu Bota as resident Deputy to my Special Envoy and as Head of Mission of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG), effective 1 October 1995.

768. Since his arrival in Georgia, the Deputy to the Special Envoy has established contacts in Tbilisi and Sukhumi and has travelled to Moscow on several occasions. Following a series of bilateral meetings between my Special Envoy and representatives of the Russian Federation in Paris and in Moscow, my Special Adviser, Ismat Kittani, visited the region and Moscow for further consultations from 14 to 18 March 1996. The Russian Federation, as facilitator, continued to make intensive efforts to reach agreement on a draft protocol that might provide the basis for a Georgian-Abkhaz settlement. Under the auspices of the United Nations, with the Russian Federation as facilitator and in the presence of the representative of OSCE, a further round of consultations involving the parties to the conflict took place in Moscow from 16 to 19 July. Ambassador Brunner and his Deputy were present in Moscow for these discussions, which focused on the draft protocol. Regrettably, these efforts have not led to substantial progress and the peace process remains at a standstill.

769. The key issue in dispute is the future political status of Abkhazia. The Government of Georgia proposes to grant Abkhazia a wide degree of autonomy within a single federal State of Georgia. The Abkhaz side recognizes that Abkhazia will be part of a single Georgian State within the boundaries of the former Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic as at 21 December 1991 and that the State should be "federative" in nature. However, it insists on describing the State as a "federative union", which will come about as the result of a treaty between two subjects of equal status under international law.

770. While a draft protocol may be signed in the near future, it seems unlikely that it will clearly define the political status of Abkhazia. However, it could serve as a framework for further negotiations and expert discussions not only on constitutional issues, but also in other areas such as economic matters, banking, finance, transport, communications, public policy (police, administration of justice and education), social affairs and military questions.

771. As part of my effort to find ways of improving the observance of human rights in the region, my Special Envoy and his Deputy initiated consultations with the Abkhaz authorities on a programme for the protection and promotion of human rights in Abkhazia. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights sent a mission to Sukhumi from 21 to 24 February. The Abkhaz authorities have agreed to the proposed programme, which is to be carried out in cooperation with OSCE. As part of the programme, an office will be established at Sukhumi, which will be staffed by a limited number of United Nations and OSCE international officials, provided that a reliable means for funding it can be agreed.

772. The Mission's tasks are mandated by the Security Council under resolution 937 (1994) of 21 July 1994. It has continued to operate in the Kodori valley and in parts of the security and restricted weapons zones. The Chief Military Observer is based at Sukhumi. The Mission has a main headquarters at Sukhumi, administrative headquarters at Pitsunda and two sector headquarters (at Gali and Zugdidi).

773. Until recently, the Mission also had eight team bases — four in the Gali sector, three in the Zugdidi sector and one in the Kodori valley — to provide a constant presence in sensitive areas and to enable UNOMIG to cooperate closely with the peace-keeping force of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). However, indiscriminate mine-laying by unknown individuals in the security and restricted weapons zones of the Gali sector — an activity that cost the life of one military observer earlier this year — has obliged UNOMIG to suspend its patrolling of the area and to withdraw all of its team bases there from the sector. As a result, the Mission is currently unable to operate in the region where it is most needed. It is also unable to implement fully two central aspects of its mandate: monitoring and verifying the implementation by the parties of the 1994 Moscow Agreement on a Cease-fire and Separation of Forces and matters related thereto; and contributing, by its presence in the area, to the creation of conditions conducive to the safe and orderly return of refugees and displaced persons.

774. In view of the danger for the observers and in order to enable UNOMIG to resume its mandated activities, the Head of Mission has sought the assistance of the Georgian authorities and that of the Abkhaz side. He has also explored with the relevant authorities what measures the CIS peace-keeping force could undertake to improve the safety of the observers. On the basis of the recommendations made by a team of United Nations demining experts who visited the area earlier this year and in the light of the Head of Mission's discussions, it was decided to provide the Mission with mine-protected

vehicles, demining equipment and some engineering support. This arrangement, when fully implemented, should enable UNOMIG to resume patrolling the Gali sector at almost the same level of operational effectiveness as previously.

775. The situation in the security and restricted weapons zones of the Gali sector remains tense, with pervasive lawlessness and criminal acts against the local population being the main problem. The perpetrators of these acts are rarely caught and are often not even sought by the authorities, usually because of lack of resources. In the Zugdidi sector, the main issue is tension among the internally displaced persons who are anxious to return to their homes on the other bank of the Inguri river, but are unwilling to do so because of concerns about their security. The situation in the Kodori valley remains stable, but the inhabitants are still suspicious of the Abkhaz army.

776. To reduce ambiguity to the minimum, UNOMIG has taken the provision of the 1994 Moscow Agreement relating to the presence of armed forces in the security zone to mean that no member of the armed forces of either the Government of Georgia or the Abkhaz side, with or without a weapon and in or out of uniform, is authorized to be present in the security zone. During the reporting period violations of the agreement were reported on both sides of the Inguri river.

777. UNOMIG has reported that the CIS peace-keeping force has been conducting its operations within the framework of the Moscow Agreement. Cooperation between UNOMIG and the CIS peace-keeping force has been satisfactory. The Mission's cooperation with the Government of Georgia and the Abkhaz authorities also continues to be good. It has also been cooperating with various non-governmental organizations and, through its office at Tbilisi, with OSCE.

778. On 17 May, the CIS Council of Heads of State extended the mandate of the CIS peace-keeping force until 19 July 1996. It instructed both the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs and the Council of Ministers of Defence of the States members of Commonwealth to pursue their efforts, together with the parties, to amplify the mandate of the force. In addition, the Council decided that the force should be entrusted with the demarcation of minefields and mine clearance in the territory of Abkhazia, with the assistance of the United Nations and in cooperation with the local authorities. The Council further instructed the parties to the conflict, with the assistance of the CIS peace-keeping force, to take additional measures to ensure the safety of UNOMIG. Discussions are continuing in Moscow between the Russian Federation, the Government of Georgia and the Abkhaz side on the extension and possible expansion of the force's mandate.

779. During the past year, no significant advance has been made on the question of the return of refugees and displaced persons to Abkhazia. Voluntary repatriation as planned in the Quadripartite Agreement on Voluntary Return of Refugees and Displaced Persons to Abkhazia has been halted since November 1994. The Abkhaz side continues to object to the large-scale and speedy return of refugees and displaced persons and maintains its position of allowing only a limited number of persons per week to return, which is unacceptable to the Georgian side. About 30,000 persons have returned spontaneously to the Gali district, where the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees provides limited assistance as part of its special programme for displaced persons in Georgia. The continued delay in resettling internally displaced persons to Abkhazia has placed a heavy burden on the economy of Georgia, weakening its capacity to recover and exacerbating social and political tensions.

780. At independence, the people of Georgia had one of the highest standards of living among the republics of the former Soviet Union. Today, despite some positive signs, the economy faces difficult problems of unemployment and underemployment, an energy crisis and deterioration of public services. Emergency relief and humanitarian aid are being provided by the United Nations and donor States, while a wide range of development initiatives have been undertaken by various organizations and donors, including the Bretton Woods institutions, EU and UNDP.

12. Guatemala

781. Negotiations between the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) have continued under the auspices of the United Nations throughout the year to find a lasting settlement of the most protracted conflict in Central America. While advances have been uneven, the signing of seven agreements since January 1994 and the continued presence of the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA) appear to confirm the irreversible nature of the peace process.

782. The last year has also seen the consolidation of democratic change in Guatemala, which has enhanced prospects for success in the negotiations. Among the positive developments were the strong appeal made by broad sectors of society (including, for the first time in many years, the leadership of the URNG) for people to vote in the presidential elections; the arrival, following the elections, of new political forces in Congress; the commitment of the new Government to fight poverty and

impunity; the unilateral cessation of hostilities by the URNG during the two rounds of the elections, their decision to cease offensive military action in March 1996 and, immediately thereafter, by a similar commitment from the Government; and, finally, the announcement by the URNG that it would suspend its practice of exacting "war taxes" once agreement was reached on the socio-economic issues.

783. Negotiations on socio-economic issues and the agrarian situation began in May 1995 and proceeded at a slow pace until they were suspended in mid-December following the election of a new Government. Following his victory in January 1996, President Alvaro Arzu reiterated his campaign pledge to continue the negotiating process and expressed his firm support for the continued presence of MINUGUA. The United Nations convened a new round of negotiations at Mexico City at the end of February 1996, and agreement was reached just over two months later on the socio-economic issues and the agrarian situation. The agreement took the form of a comprehensive package of commitments on items critical to the building of lasting peace in Guatemala, namely, an increase in government social spending, the promotion of a more efficient and equitable agrarian structure, the modernization of public administration and a sustained increase in public revenue. The agreement, signed on 6 May, emphasized the need for democratization, participation and consensus-building.

784. MINUGUA continued to fulfil the verification mandate entrusted to it in the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights and to carry out effective institution-building. The Mission's mandate was twice renewed by the General Assembly, first for six months on 4 September 1995 and then until the end of 1996 on 3 April 1996. In October 1995 and March 1996, I transmitted to the General Assembly the third and fourth reports of the Director of MINUGUA. Both documents confirmed that serious and repeated violations of human rights had continued to occur and that these had neither been clarified nor punished. While noting that some positive steps had been taken by the parties, MINUGUA observed that, overall, both the Government of Guatemala and the URNG were, by action or by omission, responsible for failure to comply with their commitments under the Comprehensive Agreement.

785. MINUGUA institution-building activities have become a fundamental instrument in improving respect for human rights. To that end, the MINUGUA/UNDP Joint Unit is implementing projects to support the Judiciary, the offices of the Public Defender and the Public Prosecutor, the Ministry of the Interior's criminal investigation capacity, the Counsel for Human Rights, the Presidential Human Rights Committee and relevant non-governmental organizations. Central to this work are the funds generously provided by Member States to my trust fund for the Guatemalan peace process.

786. In May 1996, Leonardo Franco, who had headed MINUGUA most ably since its establishment, returned to his duty station at Geneva. I appointed David Stephen to succeed him.

787. Several items remain to be negotiated, namely, the strengthening of civilian power and the role of the army in a democratic society, the reintegration of the URNG into political life, a definitive cease-fire, constitutional reforms and the electoral regime and, lastly, a schedule for implementation, enforcement and verification. Both parties must press ahead towards the culmination of the peace process — the conclusion of the Agreement on a Firm and Lasting Peace. It is also essential that the broad international coalition that has emerged in support of the Guatemalan peace process redouble its efforts to assist in implementing the peace agreement. I will do everything in my power to ensure that MINUGUA and the relevant programmes, agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system continue to make their invaluable contribution.

13. Guyana and Venezuela

788. The Presidents of Guyana and Venezuela, in accordance with the Geneva Agreement of 17 February 1966, agreed in November 1989 to seek my "good offices" in the long-standing territorial dispute between their countries.

789. Sir Alister McIntyre, who was appointed in February 1990 as my Personal Representative for the Guyana-Venezuela controversy, has continued his efforts, meeting with facilitators from Guyana and Venezuela in New York in December 1995 and in April and June 1996. A further meeting is scheduled for October.

790. My Personal Representative has informed me that relations between the two countries are good and that consultations are proceeding well. He proposed that, as a result, his meetings with the facilitators be held more frequently and he expects to visit both capitals in the latter part of August.

791. I am encouraged that both Presidents have expressed their commitment to seek a peaceful and lasting settlement to the dispute and that relations between the two countries continue to improve despite the setback caused by the environmental accident affecting parts of the area in dispute in August 1995. The efforts of my Personal Representative have also benefited from the support given by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Association of

Caribbean States (ACS). Both Guyana and Venezuela are members of the latter organization.

14. Haiti

792. During the past year, the international community intensified its efforts to help the Government of Haiti successfully to complete its transition to democracy, build the country's institutions and place it on the road to economic rehabilitation. The presence of the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH), succeeded by the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti (UNSMIH), as at 1 July 1996, contributed to the maintenance of a secure and stable environment conducive to the success of these efforts. During my third visit to Haiti, in October 1995, on the first anniversary of the return of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, I was able to witness this progress myself. On that occasion President Aristide praised the excellent cooperation between the Haitian authorities and UNMIH. On 16 November 1995, the Security Council commended UNMIH on the substantial progress it had made towards fulfilling its mandate as set out in resolution 940 (1994).

793. The 6,000-strong military component of UNMIH continued to carry out patrols, escort humanitarian relief convoys, provide logistical and security support for the presidential election and support for the Haitian authorities in the areas of law and order. UNMIH engineers undertook projects that also benefited the local population, thus enhancing the Mission's image among the Haitian people.

794. The training and monitoring of the Haitian National Police remained the priority task of the civilian police component of the Mission, which tailored its courses and training programmes to local requirements. A total of 847 United Nations civilian police in 19 locations provided on-the-job training and gave guidance to nearly 6,000 Haitian National Police personnel. As the development of a cadre of competent supervisors both in the field and in the administration lagged behind the training of basic-level policemen, the civilian police focused their efforts on the organization of the managerial components of the Haitian National Police.

795. Mindful of the need for economy, I kept the force level of UNMIH under constant review to ensure that it continued to match the tasks of the Mission. After a phased reduction of the military and civilian police personnel, 4,000 military and 300 civilian police personnel remained in the mission area by February 1996. At the meetings of the Trilateral Commission, special attention was paid to the planning of a smooth and orderly transfer to the Government of Haiti of the responsibilities and functions that had been carried out by UNMIH.

796. On 9 February, President René Préval asked me to take appropriate steps to bring about an extension of the mandate of UNMIH so that a gradual withdrawal might take place in the months ahead. Accordingly, on 14 February, I informed the Security Council of the Mission's achievements and recommended an extension of its mandate, as well as the reduction of both its military and civilian police components. The Council extended the mandate until 30 June with a military component reduced to 1,200 men, complemented by a 700-strong Canadian contingent funded by the Government of Canada and a civilian police component at the reduced level of 300 officers. On 5 March, Enrique ter Horst replaced Lakhdar Brahimi as my Special Representative for Haiti.

797. After receiving another official request from President Préval on 31 May, I recommended to the Security Council the establishment of a new mission to help professionalize the Haitian National Police in a climate of security. By its resolution 1063 (1996), the Council decided to establish UNSMIH, composed of 600 military and 300 civilian police personnel, for a period of five months. In addition, Canada and the United States agreed to finance voluntarily 700 additional military personnel. The Council also modified the previous mandate and gave priority to the continued training of the Haitian National Police under secure conditions. My Special Representative's role in the coordination of the activities of the United Nations system in the promotion of institution-building, national reconciliation and economic rehabilitation was underlined.

798. In spite of the gradual reduction of the United Nations presence in Haiti, public order has so far been maintained, thanks in part to the deployment of the new Haitian National Police at the end of February. However, the force remains a young and inexperienced institution that will continue to require support from the international community in the foreseeable future. Efforts are being made to help it acquire competent leadership and management, adequate premises and equipment and appropriate training.

799. The electoral process continued to unfold throughout 1995. Following the first round of legislative and local elections on 25 June, reruns and run-offs took place peacefully, but with a low voter turn-out, on 13 August, 17 September and 8 October. Virtually all non-Lavalas political parties decided not to participate in these latter elections, which, they claimed, were controlled by the ruling Lavalas Movement. The degree to which the boycott contributed to low voter participation is difficult to assess, since other factors may also have played a role, including economic frustrations, voter fatigue, lack of civic education and low-key campaigning. The polls resulted in a clear victory of the Lavalas Movement. The new parliament convened on 18 October in special session and started its

work under very difficult conditions, lacking adequate premises and a qualified secretariat. Its first decision was to ratify the choice of Claudette Werleigh as Prime Minister in succession to Smarck Michel, who tendered his resignation on 10 October amid increasing controversy regarding proposals for the privatization of State-owned companies.

800. Although many supporters of President Aristide wished that he would remain in office for three more years to make up for the time he had spent in exile, the presidential election was held without major incident on 17 December 1995. Again, the main non-Lavalas parties, with the exception of the Parti du Congrès des mouvements démocratique (KONAKOM), boycotted the election and voter turn-out was very low, at only 28 per cent of registered voters. René Préval won 87.9 per cent of the votes cast and was inaugurated President, in accordance with the Constitution, on 7 February. The fact that a democratically elected President succeeded another democratically elected President is to be welcomed as a significant step in the consolidation of democracy in Haiti.

801. On 3 April, at President Préval's request, the General Assembly extended the mandate of the United Nations component of the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH) until 31 August 1996. In view of the improvement in the human rights situation, the mandate of the Mission was modified and its staff reduced to about one third of its previous strength (32 observers each from the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS)).

802. MICIVIH continues to monitor human rights, to inquire about possible human rights violations and, when necessary, to transmit its reports and recommendations to the authorities concerned. It has assisted the Commission for Truth and Justice in its work and cooperates with the UNMIH civilian police and the Haitian National Police in their investigations. The Mission is now focusing on the strengthening of key institutions for the protection of human rights — the police, the penitentiary and the justice systems — and on the promotion of human rights through the development of a much needed civic education programme.

803. Democracy will not take root in Haiti and stability will be jeopardized if the new regime cannot improve the living conditions of the population. Unfortunately, development has been lagging behind, mainly because of administrative inertia. Financial resources are available: the international community remains committed for more than $1 billion over the next three years, part of which is not conditioned on the adoption of the structural adjustment programme. What is sorely lacking is absorptive capacity, as the ministries are ill-equipped to formulate and execute economic and social programmes.

804. As lead agency for governance, UNDP is providing technical assistance in this field. Progress has been made and it is hoped that projects will be implemented at a quicker pace during the remainder of the year. This would restore confidence and hope among the population. It is worth noting that many agencies of the United Nations system have included institution-building in their programmes, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in the agricultural sector, the World Health Organization (WHO) in the decentralization of health services and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the field of education.

805. The disbursements projected by the programmes, specialized agencies and financial institutions of the United Nations system are of the order of $118 million in 1996 and $157 million in 1997. More than half of these amounts will come from the World Bank ($67 million in 1996 and $80.5 million in 1997). Other United Nations donors include the International Monetary Fund (IMF) ($18 million in 1996 and $36 million in 1997), UNDP (about $30 million in 1996-1997, Capital Development Fund included), UNICEF ($15 million in 1996-1997), WFP ($5 million in 1996 and $6.5 million in 1997), FAO, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)/WHO, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNESCO. Although foreign investment has been encouraged, investors are still maintaining a cautious attitude.

15. India-Pakistan

806. The United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) continued to monitor the cease-fire in Jammu and Kashmir. It remains my view that the search for a political solution to this issue through a meaningful dialogue is a matter of urgency. Reports of incidents of violence have increased considerably in recent years and the number of casualties along the line of control remained high. Both countries have affirmed their commitment to respect the cease-fire line and to resolve the issue peacefully in accordance with the Simla Agreement of 1972. I welcome the readiness recently expressed by both Governments to resume official bilateral talks and hope the positive atmosphere will facilitate an early and peaceful resolution of differences between them, including Kashmir. I remain ready to render whatever assistance may be needed in this regard, should both countries find it useful.

16. Iraq-Kuwait

807. As we enter the seventh year of sanctions against Iraq, I deplore the fact that their easing or lifting is blocked by Iraq's continuing failure to comply with a number of obligations in the relevant Security Council resolutions. I am pleased to be able to report, however, that over the last year the situation in the demilitarized zone between Iraq and Kuwait has been calm. The United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) has contributed to this situation through its patrolling and liaison activities. Both Iraq and Kuwait have continued to cooperate with UNIKOM, an operation that underlines the indispensable role that the United Nations continues to play in restoring security to this sensitive area.

808. The period under review has been marked by major developments relating to the work of the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM), headed by Rolf Ekéus, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Action Team, with respect both to the Commission's relations with the Government of Iraq and to progress made in obtaining information regarding Iraq's proscribed nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and long-range missiles and in the disposal of those items. Despite progress in the implementation of section C of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), significant problems remain.

809. A great deal of information was made available to UNSCOM and the Action Team following the departure from Iraq of General Hussein Kamel Hassan, a former head of Iraq's Military Industrialization Corporation, which is responsible for the country's weapons programmes. In August 1995, Iraq formally acknowledged that, since the initiation of implementation of resolution 687 (1991) in April 1991, it had been withholding important information from UNSCOM and IAEA with regard to the prohibited weapons of mass destruction and related items. Iraq undertook to cooperate fully with the Commission and IAEA to clear up outstanding issues and has since repeated this assurance. Iraq also finally admitted what the Commission had known for some time, namely, that Iraq had acquired a full-scale biological weapons programme that had included the weaponization of biological agents and their deployment to field units just before the outbreak of the Gulf conflict. Iraq also acknowledged a much larger and more advanced chemical weapons programme than previously admitted, as well as having carried out flight tests of long-range missiles with chemical warheads.

810. In August 1995, the Commission obtained in Iraq more than 1 million pages of documents, photographs and other materials containing detailed information on the proscribed weapons programmes. Since then, a considerable number of additional documents have been handed over by Iraq. The Commission has focused substantial efforts and resources on the processing and analysis of these materials, work that has yielded important results and avenues for further investigation. The Commission is also continuing its investigation into Iraq's activity, particularly in the proscribed missile area, where serious concerns remain.

811. UNSCOM and the Action Team have continued their inspections of declared and non-declared facilities and installations in Iraq. UNSCOM has held a large number of meetings and seminars with the Government of Iraq and other States, with a view to clearing up the outstanding questions relating to Iraq's proscribed weapons programmes. Iraq has provided final declarations on these programmes. The Commission and the Action Team are in the process of verifying those declarations. This forms part of a joint programme of action the Commission has agreed upon with Iraq for resolving remaining issues under the mandate.

812. In March, June and July 1996, Iraq refused to grant UNSCOM inspection teams immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access to sites designated for inspection by the Commission under its mandate. In a statement of 19 March 1996, the Security Council termed Iraq's actions a clear violation of the Council's resolutions and demanded that the Government of Iraq act in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Council. The repetition of the problems resulted in the Council's adoption of resolution 1060 (1996) on 12 June and a further presidential statement on 14 June. The latter considered that the actions by Iraq constituted a clear and flagrant violation of the Council's resolutions. It also requested the Executive Chairman of UNSCOM to visit Baghdad with a view to securing immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access to sites that the Commission wished to inspect as well as to engage in a forward-looking dialogue on other issues.

813. The visit to Baghdad resulted in a joint statement signed by the Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq, Tariq Aziz, and the Executive Chairman. The statement includes an undertaking by Iraq to secure immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access to all sites the Commission wishes to inspect and an undertaking by UNSCOM that it will operate with full respect for the legitimate security concerns of Iraq. A joint programme of action aimed at resolving outstanding issues was also agreed upon. Despite these agreements, UNSCOM encountered serious problems in July when Iraq's actions made it impossible to conduct inspections in accordance with the Commission's mandate. Problems also surfaced in connection with UNSCOM efforts to verify Iraq's declarations through interviews with personnel whom Iraq had declared as having been involved in its proscribed weapons programmes. Iraq refused to

grant access to certain personnel whom UNSCOM wished to interview and attempted to impose conditions on the conduct of the interviews, which, in the view of UNSCOM, would render them of little value in the verification process.

814. The operations of the Baghdad Monitoring and Verification Centre continue to be successful in the implementation of the plans approved under resolution 715 (1991) for monitoring and verification and in support of the inspection activities of UNSCOM and the Action Team under resolutions 687 (1991) and 707 (1991). The technical quality of the Centre has been improved through the installation of a chemical laboratory and a biology room. Security has been strengthened. International monitoring teams covering all weapons categories and aerial surveillance, supported by advanced sensors and communications systems, are now in place and working at full capacity. The quality of the work has been assured because of the consistently high quality of the support provided by Member States.

815. With the unanimous adoption on 27 March of resolution 1051 (1996) — the export/import monitoring mechanism — an important step has been taken towards the full realization of the system for ongoing monitoring and verification to ensure that Iraq does not reacquire items and capabilities proscribed to it. The implementation of the resolution and the mechanism is well under way. Iraq is already required to notify the acquisition of dual-use items.

816. The Government of Germany has continued to provide the Commission and IAEA with invaluable air support for the conduct of their operations by providing both fixed-wing and rotary aircraft. This high-quality support represents one of the largest elements of assistance provided to the Commission and IAEA and remains essential to the implementation of their mandates. However, the Government of Germany has indicated its wish to terminate its support and the Commission is therefore looking to other Governments for replacements. The Commission expects, in the very near future, to complete new arrangements with the Government of Chile for the provision of the helicopter support required for operations of the Commission and IAEA in Iraq. It is expected to deploy this support in the course of August 1996. The Government of Bahrain's support for the Commission's Field Office has been outstanding and remains essential to the continued logistics lifeline to activities of the Commission and IAEA in Iraq. I wish to express the Organization's gratitude to these and other Member States that have contributed to UNSCOM operations through the provision of specialist personnel, equipment and financial resources. Over 50 Governments have now contributed voluntarily to this important operation. At the same time, the financial situation of the Special Commission, which is also responsible for financing the personnel and operation of the Action Team, remains a source of concern.

817. I have long been concerned over the plight of the Iraqi civilian population affected by the sanctions regimes and have taken every opportunity to urge Iraq to accept the temporary humanitarian measure of selling oil to purchase humanitarian goods contained initially in Security Council resolutions 706 (1991) and 712 (1991) and subsequently in resolution 986 (1995). I began consultations with the Government of Iraq in June 1995 and was very encouraged when, in January 1996, I obtained its agreement to conduct formal negotiations on the implementation of resolution 986 (1995). I then requested Hans Correll, Under-Secretary-General and United Nations Legal Counsel, to lead talks with Iraqi officials, which began in New York on 6 February 1996. Abdul-Amir Al-Anbari, Ambassador of Iraq to UNESCO, headed the Iraqi side.

818. On 20 May, an important step was taken when a Memorandum of Understanding on the implementation of the resolution was concluded between the Secretariat of the United Nations and the Government of Iraq. The President of the Security Council informed me that the members welcomed the conclusion of the Memorandum of Understanding and extended their congratulations on its achievement. On 15 July, the Government of Iraq submitted a Distribution Plan, as required by the resolution, which I approved on 18 July, subject to the condition that its implementation would be governed by resolution 986 (1995) and the Memorandum of Understanding and would be without prejudice to the procedures employed by the Committee established by resolution 661 (1990). On 8 August, after several weeks of intensive deliberations, that Committee adopted the procedures to be employed by it in the discharge of its responsibilities under paragraph 12 of resolution 986 (1995).

819. In its resolution 986 (1995), the Security Council stipulates that the United Nations Inter-agency Humanitarian Programme, taking into account the exceptional circumstances prevailing in the three northern governorates, be provided an allocation of between $130 million and $150 million every 90 days to complement the distribution by the Government of Iraq of goods imported under the resolution. Accordingly, the Inter-agency Humanitarian Programme, in close consultation with local authorities, undertook to identify the humanitarian requirements in those governorates.

820. In southern and central Iraq, the distribution of humanitarian supplies is the responsibility of the Government of Iraq, while the United Nations Inter-agency Humanitarian Programme, based on relevant provisions of resolution 986 (1995) and those related to the Memorandum of Understanding, will verify and report on the volume and

cash value of the humanitarian supplies arriving for distribution in Iraq; assure that these supplies are distributed equitably; and assess the adequacy of distributed humanitarian supplies in relation to the welfare and needs of the Iraqi population.

821. Major efforts have been made by the United Nations and other humanitarian organizations to assist the most vulnerable groups of the population of Iraq in meeting their basic needs in the areas of food and nutrition, health, water and sanitation, agriculture and shelter. However, the response to the April 1995-March 1996 consolidated inter-agency appeal remained significantly below the requirements resulting from the difficulties faced by children, women, elderly people and an increasing number of indigent families in Iraq. Several United Nations agencies operating in the field reported a continued deterioration of health and nutritional conditions, with an estimated 4 million people, the majority of them children under five, being in danger of severe physical and mental damage as a result of malnutrition.

822. In October 1995, to ensure a better response to the worsening nutrition situation in the country, WFP undertook a review of the people in need of assistance, which resulted in an increase of the number of people eligible for food aid to 2.15 million. Total deliveries of food assistance during 1995 were estimated at only 53 per cent of the quantities distributed during 1994. As a result, critical shortages of food stocks necessitated severe cuts in the ration scale and the number of beneficiaries countrywide.

823. UNICEF-supported immunization programmes have been successful. With the involvement of UNICEF and WHO, some 3.5 million children under the age of five were immunized against polio and 2.5 million against measles, countrywide. The two-round campaign against neonatal tetanus in high-risk areas covered approximately 1 million women of childbearing age. Significant responses were made towards controlling diarrhoeal and respiratory infection diseases and vitamin A deficiencies.

824. Limited assistance went to the education sector. Support to the rehabilitation of water supply and sanitation facilities and the provision of school supplies, stationery and kerosene heaters have been important components in improving the learning environment. UNICEF has continued to assist in teacher training programmes. UNESCO has been manufacturing and distributing desks, and repairing classrooms in the most affected governorates.

825. UNDP assisted in rehabilitating part of the water supply and sewage treatment facilities in Baghdad and in rural areas. UNDP also supported activities related to disabled persons and women. An important achievement during 1995 was the preparation of Iraq's first ever Human Development Report, which contains up-to-date economic development indicators. UNDP also launched a rehabilitation project to produce locally, in cooperation with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, chlorine gas for the purification of drinking water.

826. Resettlement activities continued under the coordination of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. With the support of some 30 non-governmental organizations and bilateral programmes, approximately 17,000 families received help in resettling in their villages of origin during 1995.

827. The security environment in the three northern governorates continued to affect humanitarian activities in the border areas north of Dohuk and in areas of local conflicts in northern parts of Irbil. In December 1995, two United Nations guards were killed by an explosive device while on duty in the governorate of Irbil. The guard contingent in Iraq has been providing security and communication services to United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations working within the framework of the Inter-agency Humanitarian Programme in Iraq. The contingent, at a manpower level of 150 at the end of 1995, provides advisory services to relief personnel, escorts humanitarian convoys and services United Nations communications in the northern governorates.

828. In a letter dated 31 May 1996 to the humanitarian community and Member States, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs called for continued funding support to cover substantive aspects of the Humanitarian Programme, in particular in the sector of food assistance and nutrition, basic health, agriculture, water and sanitation, as well as education and resettlement. A consolidated inter-agency humanitarian programme document covering humanitarian activities during the period from April 1996 to March 1997 was attached to the letter. Priority requirements for the period from 1 June to 31 August 1996 were estimated at $80.5 million.

829. It is a matter of great concern to me that more than 600 Kuwaiti and third-country nationals are still missing in Iraq, and I once again call upon Iraq to comply fully with its obligations in this regard. I commend the concerted efforts made by ICRC, which was given the mandate to facilitate the resolution of this important humanitarian issue, and note with satisfaction that the United Nations has been able to contribute to the effort by providing security and logistical support at UNIKOM headquarters on the Iraq-Kuwait border for the holding of a number of meetings, chaired by ICRC, of the Tripartite Commission's technical subcommittee on the military and civilian missing and mortal remains.

830. The return of property seized by Iraq to Kuwait is another of Iraq's obligations. Since my last report, however, only a few additional items have been returned. Of particular concern to me are those items which are irreplaceable, including archives belonging to the Offices of the Amir, the Prime Minister, the Cabinet and the Foreign Ministry. Other missing items of particular significance are properties belonging to Kuwait's Ministry of Defence, including 8 Mirage F1s, 200 BMB2 carriers, 6 M84 tanks, 90 M113 carriers, a Hawk missile battery, 483 Strila 3 missile batteries, 206 Osa missile batteries and 5 Amon anti-aircraft batteries. My Coordinator for the return of property from Iraq to Kuwait will continue to be available to the parties to arrange the return of these and any other items.

831. The United Nations Compensation Commission, which was established to administer the United Nations compensation fund provided for in paragraph 18 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), continued its efforts to resolve more than 2.6 million claims for compensation filed by 90 Governments and three international organizations representing stateless individuals.

832. As of August 1996, all but 150,000 of the 957,902 category "A" departure claims had been resolved. The sixth and final instalment of category "A" claims will be reviewed by the Commission's Governing Council in October 1996. The total amount of compensation awarded to successful category "A" claimants is $2.9 billion. All 6,011 category "B" serious personal injury and death claims have been resolved and the Commission's programme for such claims was concluded in December 1995. The Panel of Commissioners resolving 426,000 category "C" claims has so far issued three instalment reports covering 130,000 claims worth nearly $1 billion. In total, nearly $4 billion in compensation has so far been awarded to more than 1 million claimants.

833. A separate commissioner panel is resolving 1.24 million category "C" claims filed in a consolidated fashion by the Egyptian Central Bank on behalf of former workers in Iraq claiming for the non-transference of bank remittances. During the last year, the Commission also began the process of evaluating 10,204 category "D" claims (individual losses above $100,000), 6,150 category "E" corporate claims and 256 category "F" government claims. One corporate claims panel is addressing the claim of the Kuwait Oil Company for the cost of extinguishing the oil well fires in Kuwait following the conclusion of the Gulf War.

834. Unfortunately, only the 4,000 successful category "B" claimants (serious personal injury and death) have had their compensation awards paid in full. These payments, totalling $13.4 million, were possible only through savings made in the Commission's operating budget. The remaining $4 billion in compensation awards has remained unpaid because of the continuing lack of sufficient resources in the compensation fund.

17. Korean peninsula

835. I continued to follow developments on the Korean peninsula closely and visited the Republic of Korea in March 1996. As in previous years, my position remains that all parties concerned should continue to observe the provisions of the 1953 Armistice Agreement until a permanent peace agreement is negotiated to ensure peace and security in the peninsula. I welcome current efforts and proposals to initiate a process towards that end. I am also pleased to note that progress continues to be made in the implementation of the 1994 Framework Agreement between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States of America. Hopefully, achievements in these areas will result in the early resumption of North-South dialogue that will eventually lead to a peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula. I remain ready to provide any good offices that the parties might find useful in facilitating the process.

18. Liberia

836. The United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) was established under Security Council resolution 856 (1993) of 10 August 1993 to work with the Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the implementation of the Cotonou Peace Agreement signed between the Liberian parties on 25 July 1993. The Cotonou Agreement was supplemented the following year by the Akosombo Agreement and by the Accra Agreement. This framework was replaced on 19 August 1995 by the Abuja Agreement, which provided for a new Council of State to head a Liberian National Transitional Government and for a cease-fire, disarmament and elections within 12 months. In accordance with the Abuja Agreement, a cease-fire came into effect on 26 August 1995 and the newly composed Council of State, made up of the heads of the main factions and representatives of civilian groups, was installed at Monrovia on 1 September.

837. In its resolution 1014 (1995) of 15 September 1995, the Security Council extended the mandate of UNOMIL until 31 January 1996. Under resolution 1020 (1995) of 10 November, the Council endorsed the proposals contained in my report of 23 October to adjust the mandate of UNOMIL in the light of the Abuja Agreement and of the

lessons learned since the Mission was first established. Accordingly, UNOMIL was mandated to exercise its good offices to support the efforts of ECOWAS and the Liberian National Transitional Government in the implementation of the Abuja Agreement; to investigate violations of the cease-fire and monitor compliance with the other military provisions of the peace agreements, including disengagement of forces, disarmament and observance of the arms embargo; to assist in the implementation of a programme for demobilization of combatants; to support humanitarian activities; to investigate and report on violations of human rights; and to observe and verify free and fair elections scheduled to be held in August 1996. UNOMIL was authorized to deploy 160 military observers, who were to be co-located with ECOMOG, which continues to play the lead role in assisting the implementation of the military provisions of the peace process.

838. Despite the hopes raised by the installation of the Council of State on 1 September 1995, the peace process in Liberia soon encountered renewed difficulties. In accordance with the Abuja Agreement, the factions were to disengage by 26 September and assemble in encampment sites in preparation for the commencement of disarmament and demobilization by 1 December 1995. These deadlines were never met. In addition, owing to a chronic lack of logistic and financial resources, ECOMOG was not able to deploy throughout the country in accordance with its concept of operations.

839. In my fifteenth progress report to the Security Council on UNOMIL, dated 23 January 1996, I expressed concern over these and other delays in the implementation of the Abuja Agreement. In its resolution 1041 (1996) of 29 January, the Council extended the mandate of UNOMIL until 31 May 1996, and called upon the Liberian parties fully to respect and implement the Abuja Agreement, in particular those provisions relating to the maintenance of the cease-fire, disarmament and demobilization of combatants and national reconciliation.

840. During the first few months of this year, however, the peace process in Liberia continued to deteriorate. Ongoing skirmishes between and among the various factions escalated. On 1 March, ECOMOG withdrew from Tubmanburg following continued heavy fighting between it and troops of General Roosevelt Johnson's wing of the United Liberation Movement for Democracy (ULIMO-J). Internal conflicts within ULIMO-J and fighting between and among the various other factions created growing discord among members of the Council of State. In addition, the Council itself began to operate increasingly in ways that caused concern that some Liberian leaders were sidestepping the transitional arrangements and processes provided for under the Abuja Agreement.

841. The attempted arrest by the Council of State of General Roosevelt Johnson led on 6 April to a serious outbreak of factional fighting in Monrovia between Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) and Alhaji Kromah's ULIMO-K on the one hand, and the mainly Krahn forces of Johnson's ULIMO-J, the Liberia Peace Council (LPC) and the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) on the other. Widespread looting and the complete breakdown of law and order in the capital ensued. The resulting hostilities led to the deaths of many innocent civilians, the destruction of large parts of Monrovia and large numbers of refugees and displaced persons. In addition, most of the UNOMIL civilian and military personnel, as well as the personnel of the United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, were forced to evacuate. Their offices and warehouses, and most of Monrovia, were thoroughly looted by the fighters. Even so, UNOMIL has maintained a staff of 25 essential personnel in Liberia to assist in restoring the peace process.

842. On 9 April, the Security Council issued a presidential statement expressing grave concern at the outbreak of fighting in Monrovia and at the rapidly deteriorating situation throughout the country. On 18 April, my Special Envoy, James O. C. Jonah, arrived in Monrovia to assist the United Nations/ECOWAS mediation team in its efforts to find a peaceful resolution of the crisis and to assess the future prospects of the peace process and the role the United Nations could play in that regard. Mr. Jonah reported that the restoration of the Abuja Agreement would be a difficult process, given the deep mistrust that had developed between the factions. He also emphasized the need for Monrovia to be restored as a safe haven and for the Council of State to work within the spirit of the transitional arrangements envisaged under the Abuja Agreement.

843. As diplomatic efforts to deal with the crisis in Liberia intensified, the first meeting of the International Contact Group on Liberia was held on 26 April at Geneva. The meeting, which was organized at the initiative of the United States, was intended to bring together key donor Governments, the United Nations, ECOWAS, OAU and international agencies concerned with Liberia.

844. On 29 April, after a brief lull in the conflict, an attempted meeting of the Council of State was cut short when fighting erupted between ULIMO-J and NPFL/ULIMO-K forces near the Executive Mansion. Intense hostilities resumed in Monrovia. Fighters who had withdrawn to outlying areas returned to the city in large numbers, forcing ECOMOG to withdraw from the city centre. At the initiative of President Jerry Rawlings of the Republic of Ghana, Chairman of ECOWAS, a summit meeting of the ECOWAS Committee of Nine was called for 7 and 8 May at Accra. However, the summit had to be

postponed following the failure of seven of the nine Heads of State to attend and the refusal of Councilman Taylor and Councilman Kromah to travel to Accra for the meeting.

845. In the absence of a summit meeting, the ECOWAS Foreign Ministers adopted a Mechanism for Returning Liberia to the Abuja Agreement, under which they reaffirmed the Abuja Agreement as the basis for achieving peace in Liberia and agreed on a number of conditions to be fulfilled by the Liberian factions. The strategy that emerged from Accra was that ECOWAS would give the Liberian faction leaders two months to meet certain basic conditions, including the withdrawal of fighters from Monrovia and the redeployment of ECOMOG in the city; the return of weapons taken from ECOMOG and vehicles and other equipment looted from UNOMIL, the United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations; respect for Monrovia as a safe haven; and a return to the Abuja peace process. Unless the Liberian faction leaders demonstrated the will to meet those requirements, ECOWAS would have to re-examine its role and presence in Liberia at its forthcoming summit in July/August.

846. On 21 May, I submitted a further report to the Security Council on the situation in Liberia, recommending an extension of UNOMIL for an additional three months at its already reduced level, full support for the recommendations made by the Council of Ministers in Accra and enhanced logistical and financial support from the international community for ECOMOG. I noted that the role foreseen for UNOMIL in Liberia had been predicated upon the assumption that ECOMOG would be in a position to perform the wide-ranging tasks entrusted to it. Unfortunately, ECOMOG had never received the manpower and resources necessary to enable it to carry out its responsibilities effectively. I also noted that, should ECOWAS be compelled to withdraw ECOMOG from Liberia, UNOMIL would have no choice but to withdraw also.

847. The summit meeting of ECOWAS was held at Abuja on 26 and 27 July and was preceded by a meeting of ECOWAS Foreign Ministers. I was represented by my Special Envoy, accompanied by my Special Representative for Liberia, Anthony Nyakyi, and an expert on electoral matters. Questions considered there included the possibility of holding the elections before disarmament and demobilization; conducting the elections on the basis of proportional representation; the imposition of sanctions on recalcitrant factions and their leaders; enhancing the role of ECOWAS; strengthening the capabilities of ECOMOG; and reviewing the role of the United Nations. Some of the Liberian faction leaders who attended the summit expressed a readiness to cooperate in order to ensure that the elections were free and fair. They seemed to have realized that the international community no longer trusted their statements and that they must translate them into actions, in particular total respect for the cease-fire, disarmament and demobilization, the return of refugees and enabling ECOMOG and UNOMIL to discharge their mandates.

848. The ECOWAS summit also instructed its Committee of Nine on Liberia to convene a meeting not later than 18 August to resume discussion of the following outstanding issues: (a) the reconstitution of the Council of State, whose inadequate performance was criticized by a number of ECOWAS leaders; (b) the signing of the long-pending agreement on the status of ECOMOG in Liberia; (c) the revision and revalidation of the Abuja Agreement with a new schedule of implementation; (d) the imposition of sanctions on recalcitrant faction leaders; and (e) the conditions, timing and modalities of the elections.

849. As of early July 1996, the fighting in Liberia had left 150,000 people dead, more than 500,000 internally displaced and nearly 800,000 as refugees in neighbouring countries. When the Abuja Agreement was signed in August 1995, the international relief community presumed that the peace would require an intense humanitarian assistance effort for at least a year as refugees and internally displaced persons began to consider returning home. This planning parameter was reflected in the United Nations inter-agency consolidated appeal for Liberia, launched by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in October 1995, which sought $110 million for humanitarian assistance activities. The peace agreement also brought demobilization to the top of the planning agenda. Successful demobilization, in many ways the programmatic centrepiece of the peace agreement, would require the concerted and coordinated efforts of the whole relief community if peace was to hold.

850. In October 1995, I requested the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs to visit Liberia in an attempt to increase international attention to this forgotten emergency. One month later, a United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for Liberia took up his duties in Monrovia as head of the United Nations Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Office.

851. Also in October, to support the peace process and capitalize on the optimism it had generated in the international community, I decided to convene a donors' conference, which would provide an opportunity to support three areas critical to the peace process: support for ECOMOG, demobilization and humanitarian programmes. On 27 October, Member States assembled to address those issues under my joint chairmanship with President Rawlings of Ghana and Wilton Sankawolo, Chairman of the Liberian Council of State. While the meeting was deemed a success, it did not result in the pledges required.

852. The renewed outbreak of hostilities in Monrovia in April 1996 forced the evacuation from Monrovia of nearly all international relief personnel. Only 15 international United Nations humanitarian staff members were able to remain, including the Humanitarian Coordinator and several of his staff. The Coordinator and his staff worked closely with United Nations agency colleagues from WFP, other United Nations agencies and a small number of international and local non-governmental organizations to assess the impact of the fighting on civilian populations and then deliver aid to the needy.

853. The challenges for the relief community in the days ahead include completing a full assessment of the impact of the fighting, restarting operations up-country and revising plans for demobilization and reintegration. Those challenges are being met in a working environment where security is minimal at best and where agencies and donors, having seen their humanitarian equipment completely looted by factions two and sometimes three times, are very concerned about the future of relief efforts in Liberia. United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations have decided to provide only essential services on a targeted basis until better operating conditions are ensured.

19. Middle East

854. The period covered by this report was marked by a series of developments underlining the existing difficulties but also demonstrating the parties' determination to proceed on the road to peace. The concentrated efforts of the United Nations have been aimed at supporting the peace process, politically and economically, in order to reinforce what has been achieved in the course of negotiations and to help build the foundations for a lasting peace in the Middle East.

855. Following the signing of the Interim Agreement by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) on 28 September 1995, the redeployment of Israeli military forces began in November and was completed, in some cases ahead of schedule, in a number of major cities in the West Bank and in many towns and villages. Authority was transferred to the Palestinians in varying degrees in additional areas, such as local government and commercial activities, and the arrival of Palestinian police was carried out smoothly. A particularly outstanding achievement was the holding of the first Palestinian elections on 20 January 1996. I warmly welcomed this decisive development, which constituted an important step towards the achievement of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and provided a solid basis towards their self-determination.

856. The Israeli-Palestinian peace talks have been accompanied by tragic events, however, first and foremost the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin at a peace rally in Tel Aviv on 4 November 1995. I represented the United Nations at his funeral. The world was further dismayed by four suicide bombings in Israel in February and March, which caused 60 deaths and hundreds of injuries. I condemned this upsurge of terrorism in the strongest terms and called on the world community to unite in action against such despicable acts of violence. Following these events, I attended the Summit of Peacemakers in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, at the invitation of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and United States President Bill Clinton. Fully supporting the Summit's decisions, I expressed the readiness of the United Nations to assist in implementing them in the legal and practical fields.

857. At the same time, the prolonged closure of the West Bank and Gaza, which was intended by Israel to prevent further terrorist attacks, became the focus of international attention because of its drastic effect on the Palestinian economy. In a letter dated 28 March, I urged Prime Minister Shimon Peres to consider lifting the closure, at least gradually, in order to allow the normal provision of services by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to Palestinian refugees. The subject was taken up by the Security Council at a formal meeting on 15 April 1996.

858. The United Nations system of programmes and agencies, under the general guidance of the Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories, Terje Rod Larsen, has continued to provide assistance to the Palestinian people. A coordination mechanism has been established on the ground to ensure effective disbursement of donor funds. A measure of progress has been achieved in job creation, institution-building, infrastructure development and police training. However, some momentum was lost because of Israel's closure of the West Bank and Gaza, and it took more effort to sustain these improvements.

859. In late March, the Special Coordinator, in cooperation with the Palestinian Authority, the Government of Israel and key donors, developed an emergency humanitarian plan in an effort to ease the social and economic dislocation of the Palestinians. Immediately put into effect, the plan has attempted to alleviate closure-related hardships and losses by creating job opportunities, project development and the mobilization of necessary resources.

860. On 15 July, UNRWA headquarters were transferred from Vienna to Gaza City. The move will allow much closer coordination between headquarters and field operations and better contact between UNRWA and the beneficiaries of its services, the Palestinian refugees.

861. The situation in southern Lebanon, where Israel has continued to occupy Lebanese territory, remained tense and

volatile. Hostilities continued between the Israel Defence Forces and armed elements, mainly the Islamic Resistance, who have proclaimed their determination to resist the Israeli occupation. On several occasions, civilian targets on both sides came under attack. I urged the parties to exercise restraint, bearing in mind the risk of escalation, which remains high in a situation where the actions of the parties on the ground are influenced both by local dynamics and strategic considerations. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) continued to do its best to limit the conflict and to protect inhabitants from its effects.

862. In February and March, there was a steady escalation of tension along the Israel-Lebanon border. The fighting in Lebanon intensified and the number of military casualties, in particular on the Israeli side, increased. In one incident, on 4 March, four Israel Defence Force soldiers were killed and nine others were wounded by a roadside bomb. In another incident, on 20 March, a suicide bomber hurled himself at an Israeli convoy in south Lebanon, killing one Israeli officer and wounding five others. These incidents coincided with suicide bomb attacks in Israel, responsibility for which was claimed by the Palestinian faction Hamas. On 30 March, armed elements in Lebanon fired rockets towards Israel after two civilians in Lebanon had been killed by Israeli missile fire. On 9 April, armed elements again fired rockets towards Israel after a south Lebanese youth was killed in the explosion of an anti-personnel device. The rockets caused damage and mostly light casualties among Israeli citizens.

863. A particularly grave escalation of hostilities occurred in April. From 11 to 26 April, the Israel Defence Forces launched massive artillery strikes against southern Lebanon and air raids inside Lebanon, including Beirut and the Beka'a valley. Israeli aircraft carried out attacks on villages in and around the UNIFIL area of operation. In response, armed elements fired more than 1,000 rockets at targets in Israel and at Israeli positions in Lebanon, causing injuries and damage. Concerned about the dangerous flare-up of fighting, I urged the parties to exercise restraint and to implement all relevant Security Council resolutions. The Council addressed the situation in Lebanon during a formal meeting on 15 April.

864. The hostilities resulted in hundreds of casualties among Lebanese civilians and caused the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people. Dozens of Lebanese villages were destroyed or damaged. Roads, bridges and elements of infrastructure were targeted and put out of order or demolished. More than 5,000 people sought refuge with UNIFIL. In one incident on 18 April, more than 100 people were killed and hundreds wounded when Israeli shells hit the UNIFIL position (the headquarters of the Fijian battalion) in the village of Qana at a time when hundreds of civilians had sought refuge there.

865. I viewed with utmost gravity the shelling of the Fijian position, as I would hostilities directed against any United Nations peace-keeping position. In view of the seriousness of the events at Qana, I immediately dispatched my Military Adviser, Major-General Franklin van Kappen, to Lebanon to conduct an investigation into the shelling and submitted his findings and Israel's comments to the Security Council.

866. At another formal meeting on 18 April, the Security Council adopted resolution 1052 (1996), in which it called for an immediate cessation of hostilities by all parties and supported the ongoing diplomatic efforts to that end. It also called upon all concerned to respect the safety, security and freedom of movement of UNIFIL and to allow it to fulfil its mandate without any obstacle or interference. Subsequently, the General Assembly, during its resumed fiftieth session and at the request of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, adopted resolution 50/22 C entitled "The Israeli military attacks against Lebanon and their consequences", under the agenda item on the situation in the Middle East.

867. The fighting stopped after the announcement of a cease-fire agreement on 26 April, which was the result of intensive diplomatic efforts by the United States and France in particular. Armed groups in Lebanon committed themselves not to carry out attacks into Israel and Israel undertook not to fire at civilian targets in Lebanon. The understanding provides for a monitoring group consisting of France, Israel, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United States. This agreement has the potential to contribute to the protection of civilians and to restrain the parties, and I have instructed UNIFIL to provide assistance to the monitoring group, which has requested facilities for its meetings at the UNIFIL headquarters compound at Naqoura. I welcomed the agreement and expressed my earnest hope that the restoration of calm in the area would enhance the prospects for negotiations leading to a comprehensive peace settlement that would preclude further tragic events. Since the end of April, the situation in southern Lebanon has been relatively calm, allowing the return of displaced people to their home areas. However, hostilities between armed elements and Israeli forces have continued as before.

868. Throughout the violence, UNIFIL continued to do its best to protect the civilian population and to provide humanitarian assistance. Despite the Israeli bombardment and harassment by both sides, UNIFIL continued to patrol its area actively. It organized convoys for the villagers who wished to leave and brought supplies for those who chose to remain. It also provided shelter, food and medicine to the civilians who had sought protection at its camps and positions.

869. On 13 April, the Government of Lebanon requested the United Nations to prepare and launch an international appeal for assistance. One week later, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs launched a flash appeal seeking $8.6 million for emergency relief for the 20,000 most affected families, representing 100,000 to 120,000 of the 400,000 persons displaced by the hostilities. The overall response of the international community has been positive, with donors committing approximately $13 million. On 20 and 21 April, the Department dispatched two aircraft to Beirut with relief supplies made available by the Government of Italy with a total value of $250,000. Commodities included blankets, emergency health kits, jerry cans, kitchen sets, water tanks, water pumps and generators, most of which were transferred to the UNIFIL logistics base at Tyre for distribution in the affected areas.

870. In its resolution 1068 (1996) of 30 July, the Security Council reaffirmed the mandate of UNIFIL as defined in its resolution 425 (1978) and subsequent resolutions, namely, to confirm the withdrawal of Israeli forces, to restore international peace and security and to assist the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area. Pursuant to Council resolution 1006 (1995), the operation's administrative and support services have been streamlined, an exercise completed in May 1996 that should achieve direct savings in personnel costs of approximately $10 million per year. The year's events have highlighted the obstacles that have for so long prevented UNIFIL from implementing its mandate. As in the past, the parties have not cooperated with the Force to the extent required and there has been no active political pressure on them to do so. In the circumstances, UNIFIL has done its best to limit violence and to protect the civilian population. However, as a peace-keeping force, it is powerless when either party is bent on confrontation.

871. The United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) continued to supervise the separation between Israeli and Syrian forces and the limitation of armaments and forces provided for in the disengagement agreement of 1974. With the cooperation of both sides, UNDOF has discharged its tasks effectively and its area of operation has been quiet. In my report of 28 May, I noted that the enduring scarcity of resources available to the Organization had compelled me to seek ways to reduce expenditures in UNDOF and other peace-keeping operations. Since 1992, UNDOF has implemented two streamlining exercises, which have reduced its size and budget by more than 20 per cent, leaving it a very lean and cost-effective operation. That this had been possible is due in large part to the very good cooperation extended to the Force by both Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic. UNDOF will be kept under close scrutiny with a view to using every opportunity for further economies.

872. The United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), which was the first United Nations peace-keeping operation and is thus the oldest, having been in existence for over 48 years, has continued to assist UNDOF and UNIFIL in carrying out their tasks and has maintained its small presence in Egypt. A gradual streamlining undertaken by UNTSO is nearing completion. This exercise will result in a reduction in strength and corresponding savings in its annual budget of over 20 per cent.

873. Multilateral negotiations on Middle East regional issues such as economic cooperation, environment, refugees and water resources have continued, creating a network of common projects among countries in the region. The United Nations is actively engaged as a full extraregional participant in these proceedings.

20. Myanmar

874. In keeping with the good offices mandate I received from the General Assembly and from the Commission on Human Rights, I continued my dialogue with the Government of Myanmar in order to address the various issues of concern to the international community, in particular the process of democratization and national reconciliation in that country. During the period under review, my Representatives held talks in New York in April and in Bangkok in June with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, but the Government did not accede to my request for discussions to be held in Yangon.

875. While welcoming the willingness expressed by the Government to continue a dialogue with me and my Representatives, I note with disappointment the lack of progress in addressing the concerns reflected in General Assembly resolutions. I look forward to further contacts in Myanmar prior to the submission of my report on this subject to the Assembly at its fifty-first session.

21. Nigeria

876. The annulment of the results of the 1993 presidential election in Nigeria witnessed the beginning of political tension and confrontation between the Government of Nigeria and its opponents. In 1995, a number of military officers and civilians were sentenced for involvement in what the Government described as an attempted coup. I sent a Special Envoy to appeal to the Government to commute the sentences, which it agreed to do. In the

meantime, a number of Nigerians from the Ogoni area were submitted to trial under the Civil Disturbance (Special Tribunal) Act. Nine of them, including the writer and human rights activist Ken Saro-Wiwa, were subsequently sentenced to death and executed, despite worldwide demand that the sentences be commuted. These executions led to international condemnation and to the adoption of General Assembly resolution 50/199.

877. Pursuant to that resolution and taking into consideration the request made by the Government of Nigeria, I dispatched a mission, led by Justice Atsu-Koffi Amega, former President of the Supreme Court and former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Togo. The other members of the mission were Justice V. A. Malimath, member of the National Human Rights Commission of India, and John P. Pace, Chief of the Legislation and Prevention of Discrimination Branch of the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat. The mission visited Nigeria from 28 March to 13 April 1996. Its report, submitted on 23 April, dealt with the two main issues under its terms of reference: the trials and the programme of transition to a civilian and democratic rule.

878. With respect to the trials, which were carried out under the Civil Disturbance (Special Tribunal) Act, the mission recommended the repeal of the Act, or failing that, that it be amended to ensure: (a) the deletion of its provisions appointing a serving member of the armed forces to the Special Tribunal and excluding the jurisdiction of the courts of law to review the decisions of the Special Tribunal; and (b) the addition of provisions appointing the members of the Special Tribunal on the recommendation of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Nigeria, confirming the order of conviction and sentence by the Nigerian Court of Appeal instead of the Provisional Ruling Council and appealing to the Supreme Court against the decision of the Special Tribunal.

879. As for the transition programme, the mission recommended the release of all political detainees under Decree No. 2 of 1984 and the granting of amnesty to persons convicted of political offences. It also recommended that the present committees and commissions under the programme be strengthened by inviting persons holding different shades of opinion to participate; that an international team of observers monitor the implementation of the programme; that all decrees promulgated by the military Government be reviewed with a view to repealing those which encroached on the human rights provisions of the constitution; that orders and judgements by the courts be carried out promptly by the Government; that restrictions on political and professional organizations be lifted; and that restrictions on the freedom of expression be removed.

880. I sent my Special Envoy, Lakhdar Brahimi, to Abuja from 10 to 14 April. He presented the report of the fact-finding mission to the Head of State of Nigeria, General Sani Abacha, and urged him to implement the mission's recommendations. In a letter to me dated 21 May, the Special Adviser to the Head of State indicated the steps the Government was taking to implement some of the recommendations. I sent Assistant Secretary-General Lansana Kouyate as my Special Envoy to Abuja from 26 to 28 June and again from 9 to 10 August for follow-up consultations with the Government. I am convinced that implementation of the report's recommendations, in particular those relating to the release of political prisoners and detainees and respect for human rights and political freedoms, will promote national reconciliation and encourage Nigerians of different political affiliations to take part in the transition programme and democratic process of their country.

22. The Papua New Guinea island of Bougainville

881. I welcomed the All-Bougainville Leaders' Talks, held at Cairns from 14 to 18 December 1995, which were attended by major Bougainville political figures. At the request of the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, and with the agreement of both sides to the conflict, my Representative, as well as the Representative of the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, assisted in facilitating the talks. In a joint communiqué and an agenda adopted at the meeting, the two delegations agreed to an agenda and a process of dialogue, subject to the agreement of the Government of Papua New Guinea, which would lead to a new round of talks in 1996 inside Bougainville. The Bougainvillian delegations also agreed to facilitate the implementation of a reconstruction and rehabilitation programme by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and an immunization programme by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

882. Unfortunately, there has been no follow-up to the Cairns talks, the outcome of which did not receive the ratification of the Government of Papua New Guinea. Since the beginning of the year, the situation on the ground has been marred by a series of incidents, leading eventually to the Government's announcement that, owing to the increase in attacks by the Bougainville Revolutionary Army, it was lifting the cease-fire, which had been technically in place since September 1994. The deteriorating situation on the island has, in turn, had spill-over effects on the Solomon Islands. I take this opportunity to reiterate my conviction that only a political solution can bring the conflict in

Bougainville to an end. For my part, I remain ready to assist in facilitating the resumption of the peace process.

23. Rwanda

883. During the past year, relative calm and stability have prevailed in Rwanda. The country has made significant progress since the genocide and the end of the civil war in July 1994. By the beginning of 1996, child immunization, sanitation, urban water supply and health care were at 80 per cent of their pre-war level; industrial production was at 75 per cent; and public transport, primary schools and university education were functioning at 60 per cent. Agricultural production had recovered to approximately 80 per cent of pre-1994 levels, although a WFP/FAO assessment mission conducted in June 1996 identified the need for additional food aid for some 576,000 persons during the remainder of the year. The Government, despite a significant lack of human and material resources, has taken important steps concerning human settlements and housing, infrastructure rehabilitation, assistance to vulnerable population groups and improvement of general living conditions, especially in the communes where most Rwandans lived and from which most refugees had fled.

884. Major challenges remain, however, for which the assistance of the international community is vital. These include the return, resettlement and reintegration of 1.7 million refugees; progress towards national reconciliation; the revival of the national judicial process; the improvement of prison conditions; effective measures to curb destabilization activities; and the equitable disbursement of aid.

885. Pursuant to the request of the Government and Security Council resolution 1029 (1995) of 12 December, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) was reduced and then withdrew from the country following the expiry of its mandate on 8 March 1996. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 50/58 L of 22 December 1995, I began consultations with the Government and relevant United Nations agencies on the nature and role of a continued United Nations presence in Rwanda in the post-UNAMIR period.

886. Occasional differences cropped up between UNAMIR and the Government, although relations continued to be generally good during the final three months of the mandate. The disposition of UNAMIR equipment and assets was a case in point; so was the Government's insistence that contractors providing goods and services for the exclusive use of UNAMIR should pay various types of taxes. The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs visited Kigali from 19 to 24 April 1996 to help conclude negotiations on these issues which had been initiated by my Special Representative for Rwanda, Shaharyar Khan. With regard to the disposition of UNAMIR equipment, the Government, after inspecting the various items, decided to accept them. However, the tax dispute could not be resolved.

887. In his consultations with the Rwandan authorities, the Under-Secretary-General recalled that the Security Council had welcomed the letter from the Foreign Minister of Rwanda of 1 March, which described the functions the Government wished the United Nations to perform following the departure of UNAMIR and recorded its acceptance of the maintenance of a United Nations office in Rwanda. It was on that basis that in its resolution 1050 (1996) on 8 March, the Security Council had encouraged me to maintain such an office for the purpose of supporting the Government's efforts to promote national reconciliation, strengthen the judicial system, facilitate the return of refugees and rehabilitate the country's infrastructure, and of coordinating the United Nations efforts to that end.

888. At the Government's request, the Under-Secretary-General provided clarification about the modalities for such an office, including the duration of its mandate, its size and resources and the functions to be performed by its head, as outlined in the addendum to my report on the implementation of resolution 1050 (1996). On 23 April, the Government decided to confirm its acceptance of a United Nations office for an initial period of six months. However, the Government was not willing to approve the proposal to continue the operation of the United Nations radio station, which had been a very successful element of UNAMIR. Instead, it offered three hours of air time daily on the national radio station. The Secretariat is examining such an alternative. I regret that despite continuing consultations with the Government conditions do not yet exist for the opening of the United Nations office.

889. I have repeatedly drawn the Security Council's attention to the negative impact of insurgent activities by elements of the former Rwandese Government Forces and *interahamwe* militia, which undermine the Government's efforts to normalize the internal political and security situation and its relations with neighbouring countries. The border areas with Zaire are the most affected by the destabilization attempts and by government countermeasures. They contribute to the prevailing tensions in western Rwanda, where, according to the Government, a large number of infiltrators coordinate insurgent activities and where acts of sabotage and the use of landmines have increased.

890. In particular, attacks on survivors of the genocide have increased markedly during the first half of 1996, with at least 98 cases of attacks, including at least 85 killings. In several of the incidents, perpetrators attacked in large

groups and systematically targeted communities of genocide survivors and old case-load refugees. The United Nations Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda reports that in the vast majority of cases the perpetrators were elements of the former Rwandese Government Forces, *interahamwe* militias or insurgents opposed to the Government of Rwanda.

891. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1013 (1995) of 7 September, I established an international commission of inquiry to investigate reports of military training and arms transfers to the former Rwandese Government Forces. The six-member Commission, based at Nairobi, has visited Burundi, Rwanda, Seychelles and Zaire in the course of its work. In an interim report dated 29 January 1996, the Commission concluded that Rwandan men were receiving military training to conduct destabilizing raids into Rwanda. In a second report, dated 14 March, the Commission concluded that it was highly probable that a violation of the United Nations arms embargo had taken place involving the supply of more than 80 tons of rifles, grenades and ammunition in two consignments flown to Goma airport, Zaire, on 17 and 19 June 1994 and subsequently transferred to the Rwandan government forces then in Gisenyi, Rwanda. If that was the case, the Commission believed that the Government of Zaire or elements within it, in at least that one case, had aided and abetted violation of the embargo.

892. On the basis of its findings, the Commission proposed a number of specific measures to deter possible attempts to sell or supply arms to the former Rwandese Government Forces in the future, and to encourage further investigation of violations believed to have taken place in the past. In its resolution 1053 (1996) of 23 April, the Security Council requested me to maintain the Commission of Inquiry as an interim measure, as an element of deterrence and oversight until a longer-term solution could be found, to maintain contacts with the Governments of the Great Lakes region, to follow up its investigations, to respond to any further allegations of violations and to make periodic reports to me on the evolution of the situation with regard to compliance with the relevant Council resolutions.

893. The Security Council also requested me to consult with States neighbouring Rwanda, in particular Zaire, on the possible deployment of United Nations observers on the airfields and border crossing points for the better implementation of the arms embargo and to deter the shipment of arms to the former Rwandese Government Forces in violation of the arms embargo. I wrote to the Government of Zaire drawing its attention to this provision and requesting its consent for the stationing of observers. I also wrote to the Governments of Zaire, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania requesting them to receive the Commission and to assist it in its investigations.

894. The Council called upon States that had not yet done so to cooperate fully with the Commission, to investigate the apparent complicity of their nationals in suspected violations of the embargo and to make available to the Commission the results of their investigations. The Commission has returned to the Great Lakes region to pursue its investigations in accordance with resolution 1053 (1996) and is to submit its findings in time for me to complete my report to the Council, as requested, by 1 October.

895. In a letter addressed to me on 29 May, President Mobutu Sese Seko requested that United Nations observers be deployed to North and South Kivu for the purpose of exercising surveillance over the flow of goods through the airports of Goma and Bukavu, and of monitoring the movement of persons along the common borders of Zaire with Rwanda and Burundi. I notified the President of the Security Council of this development on 4 June, and informed him that, in view of the position adopted by the President of Zaire and as requested by the Council, I was also consulting other States neighbouring Rwanda about these measures and would inform the Council of their reaction. I also announced my intention of dispatching a technical mission to the area to collect information and prepare a report, on the basis of which I would submit appropriate recommendations to the Council for the eventual deployment of United Nations observers. I pointed out that such deployment would be possible only if the required financial resources were made available.

896. The Secretariat assembled a 10-person technical mission, which would visit the airports of Goma and Bukavu, as well as the Zairian border areas mentioned in President Mobutu's letter, to examine the modalities of deployment of United Nations observers in pursuance of resolution 1053 (1996), including the number of observers needed, their location and the logistic support they would require.

897. On 13 June, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior of Zaire, while reaffirming the agreement in principle of President Mobutu to the deployment of United Nations observers in Zaire, requested, through the UNDP Resident Representative at Kinshasa, that the departure of the technical team be deferred until the Government of Zaire had received more detailed terms of reference and had obtained clarification on a number of points, including whether other countries in the region had also accepted the deployment of United Nations observers. On the following day, the Secretariat, while pointing out that the decision of the Secretary-General to send a technical team was a direct response to the request contained in President Mobutu's letter of 29 May, transmitted detailed terms of reference to the Zairian authorities, as well as replies to all the points raised by them. On 9 July, the Minister of the Interior of

Zaire wrote to the UNDP Resident Representative at Kinshasa to communicate the decision of his Government to receive the technical mission at Kinshasa to discuss its terms of reference, as well as related questions concerning the deployment of military observers.

898. The Under-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping Operations replied on 10 July, pointing out that the mission's terms of reference were contained in paragraph 7 of resolution 1053 (1996), and recalling that detailed terms of reference had already been sent to the Government of Zaire, as well as the additional information the Government had requested. The Under-Secretary-General requested the Minister to confirm that the Government was prepared to receive the technical mission on that basis, so that the Secretariat could propose a specific date for the visit.

899. The safe, organized and voluntary repatriation of Rwandan refugees has remained a priority. The efficient manner in which the Government of Rwanda handled the forcible repatriation by Zaire of some 13,000 refugees in August 1995 attested to the progress made in stabilizing Rwanda. Despite the unexpected expulsion, the Government, with the assistance of UNAMIR, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, received and resettled its nationals in a generally humane and orderly manner. Rwandan officials have reaffirmed their desire to see refugees return and promised to do everything in their power to facilitate voluntary return in conditions of safety and dignity.

900. In July 1996, some 15,000 Rwandan refugees were forcibly repatriated from Burundi. Most of the refugees have been transported to their home communities with the assistance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The Government of Burundi had announced the closure of all Rwandan refugee camps after the sixth meeting of the Tripartite Commission (UNHCR/ Rwanda/Burundi), held at Bujumbura on 17 July. Since the coup, however, the authorities suspended repatriation programmes for the Rwandan refugees.

901. In September 1995, the two Tripartite Commissions, involving Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zaire and UNHCR, took practical measures for large-scale repatriation. Rwanda agreed to strengthen reception facilities, reduce border controls and provide security and protection to returnees in collaboration with UNHCR and other human rights organizations. Zaire agreed to reduce all forms of intimidation in the camps within its borders. In response to the anticipated increase in the rate of returns to Rwanda, UNHCR expanded its information campaign to promote refugee return and augmented its facilities at official border entry points to ensure proper reception of all. Activities were also expanded, with the cooperation of UNDP, in the communes of origin, to commence the rehabilitation of returnees.

902. Although UNHCR, Rwanda and the host countries have made concerted efforts to accelerate voluntary return, its pace has not been uniform. From an average of 5,000 a month through much of 1995, the number of returnees increased to more than 14,000 in January 1996 and 23,000 in February, before reverting to its earlier average of around 5,000 a month. However, an estimated 1.1 million Rwandan refugees remain in Zaire, 511,000 in the United Republic of Tanzania and 97,000 in Burundi. Despite sustained efforts, many difficult issues involving repatriation remain unresolved and the number of returnees is unlikely to increase significantly. In the Masisi region of Zaire, the situation is aggravated by civil strife. Deprived of their Zairian nationality in 1981, more than 16,000 Banyarwanda of Tutsi origin fled from that region and crossed the border to Rwanda in April. These expulsions, and the killings that accompanied them, have had grave humanitarian consequences and created additional problems between the Governments of Rwanda and Zaire.

903. In July, approximately 15,000 refugees living in Burundi were forcibly repatriated to Rwanda. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees wrote to the Heads of State of Burundi and Rwanda protesting at this forced repatriation, which was carried out in contravention of the relevant Tripartite Commission and in collusion between the armed forces of the countries concerned. Fortunately, the operation was suspended before even larger numbers were forcibly repatriated.

904. The main obstacles to voluntary refugee return continue to be fear of oppression, intimidation, misinformation and political dissuasion by former Rwandese Government Forces and their leaders in the camps. The problem is compounded by misperception that living conditions in the camps are relatively better than those expected back home. Refugees also fear that their suspected role in the 1994 genocide will expose them to reprisal, denunciation or imprisonment upon return. The Government has consistently affirmed that although all returnees are welcome, those who planned or carried out the genocide would face imprisonment. Another deterrent has been the shortage of adequate housing. In the event of large-scale repatriation, conflicts over housing and property will inevitably occur. Repatriation remains, however, the only durable solution to the refugee problem and efforts to that end should be pursued and accelerated. National reconciliation will depend not only on the safe repatriation and reintegration of refugees but also on an effective and credible national judicial system to ensure justice and equal treatment for all Rwandans.

905. Because of constitutional, administrative and human resource constraints, restoration of the national judicial system has been considerably delayed, causing frustration both within Rwanda and in the international community. Emergency measures to alleviate appalling prison conditions could not keep up with the ever-increasing number of detainees, now estimated at 76,000. More than 25,000 are held in local detention centres (*cachots*), where overcrowding increased and conditions deteriorated sharply in the first half of 1996. Cases of disease and death in local detention centres, some of them resulting from suffocation due to extreme overcrowding, also increased. Rwandan central prisons remain grossly overcrowded, even though the high mortality rate of 1995 has fallen substantially. Since 1995, however, prison capacity has increased by 25,000 to around 40,000. Arrests continue to be carried out, in most cases outside legal procedures, while progress in establishing and preparing case files remains slow. Triage committees have met in only a few prefectures and, as a result, very few detainees have been released. The Minister of Justice has sought international assistance to establish such committees in all 147 communes.

906. In late 1995, the newly established Supreme Court of Rwanda began reviewing the judicial system to ensure that it became operational and that those responsible for the genocide were brought to justice. Arrest and detention procedures were also reviewed. On 13 January 1996, the National Assembly announced amendments to the Constitution that would allow suspects to be brought to trial, although genocide is not mentioned in the Rwandan Criminal Code. No trial has yet taken place, however.

907. The United Nations Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda continued to visit prisons and detention centres on a regular basis and to provide assistance to the judicial system and to the promotion of human rights. Its focus is on confidence-building and on human rights monitoring among returnees. In seeking to redress violations and improve conditions of detention in accordance with international human rights standards, the Field Operation coordinates with ICRC.

908. However, the Operation has been plagued by a lack of secure and predictable sources of funding. While the Government made it clear that it wanted the number of human rights monitors to be increased to 300, the actual number of monitors was 116 in June 1996. In addition, the withdrawal of UNAMIR has taken away an important support base for the Operation. I continue to believe that the Field Operation is an important element of the United Nations presence in Rwanda. Unfortunately, the persistent lack of financial resources jeopardizes its continued existence.

909. On 12 December 1995, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda issued its first indictment. On 8 January 1996, its second plenary session was held at Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, and on 19 February two additional indictments were announced. Arrest warrants were issued and temporary arrangements made for detainees awaiting trial pending the construction of permanent facilities at Arusha. It is anticipated that the Tribunal will hold 12 trials during 1996.

910. On 29 February, the Security Council appointed Justice Louise Arbour (Canada) as Prosecutor of the International Tribunal, to succeed Justice Richard Goldstone (South Africa), whose resignation will take effect on 1 October.

911. In April, the Tribunal and the Government of Rwanda reached agreement on the rental of the Amahoro Hotel at Kigali, previously occupied by UNAMIR. Agreement was also reached on the protection of personnel, premises and investigation teams of the Tribunal, the security and protection of which rest primarily with the Government of Rwanda.

912. As the humanitarian situation in Rwanda continued to improve, the transition from emergency relief progressed steadily to rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. In this connection, I wish to recall the efforts and assistance rendered by UNAMIR to the start-up of rehabilitation and reconstruction in the country in addition to its mandated tasks. It rebuilt 14 bridges and repaired 13 roads. It made Kigali airport operational again and provided solar panels, antennas, repeaters and other equipment to restore telephone communications. Its medical personnel treated 1,600 people daily and vaccinated 62,000. In addition to providing medical supplies and training for local hospital staff throughout the country, UNAMIR helped transport 1 million refugees and displaced persons and assisted in their resettlement with the distribution of food, seeds, agricultural tools and even cattle. It also helped to relieve prison overcrowding by creating new space for about 20,000 inmates and relocated an estimated 10,000. Finally, it cleared over 1,400 mines and disposed of over 1,500 pieces of unexploded ordnance.

913. In recognition of the country's transition from emergency operational assistance requirements to longer-term rehabilitation and developmental needs, the functions of the United Nations Rwanda Emergency Office were assumed by the Resident Coordinator, who was also appointed as Humanitarian Coordinator, as at 31 October 1995. By mid-1995, all camps for internally displaced persons in Rwanda had been closed and the majority of the displaced had returned to their home communes.

914. In 1995, the United Nations consolidated inter-agency appeal for persons affected by the crisis in Rwanda identified requirements for Rwanda and the subregion totalling $668,214,031. As at February 1996, when the appeal expired, a total of $535,412,857 had been received in contributions and pledges for the assistance programmes of the United Nations system and its humanitarian partners. The Government of Rwanda rejected plans for the issue of a separate appeal for emergency relief in Rwanda in 1996. Instead, Rwanda was covered under the United Nations consolidated fund-raising document for the Great Lakes region (1 January-31 December 1996) issued in February. In a separate initiative by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the Integrated Regional Information Network was established at Nairobi in November 1995 to facilitate the dissemination of information to humanitarian partners on developments in the Great Lakes region from a regional perspective. At the Rwanda round-table conference, held at Geneva on 20 and 21 June 1996, donors pledged over $627 million to the Government's medium-term plan for 1996-1998.

915. There are many lessons to be learned from the United Nations operation in Rwanda, whose mandate was adjusted a number of times as events rapidly unfolded. Perhaps one of the most important of these is the need for flexibility in matching the Mission's mandate to the needs of the moment.

916. In its final phase, after the war, the United Nations came under great pressure from the Government of Rwanda to provide practical assistance in the provision of resources that were available to UNAMIR but which the Government and the country as a whole sorely lacked. UNAMIR was not mandated to provide such assistance and thus lost an opportunity to regain some of the credibility it had lost in the eyes of the Government with the sudden withdrawal of much of its personnel in the immediate wake of the genocide.

917. This experience in Rwanda has shown that there is a period after a conflict but before peace-building has begun when United Nations peace-keeping can play a unique role in basic rehabilitation. Acting under the overall authority of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, engineering and logistical units, working in close cooperation with the Government and with United Nations agencies, can assist in the reopening of airports, the restoration of essential services such as water, power and telecommunications, the restoration of essential buildings and the resumption of civic services, including hospitals and schools. The lesson to be learned from Rwanda is that a more comprehensive and flexible approach, based on assessment of the host country's real needs and a peace-keeping mission with a mandate, composition and budget that enable it to render this kind of assistance, could help to eliminate stresses of the kind experienced by UNAMIR throughout its time in Rwanda.

918. While the situation in Rwanda normalizes further, tension and instability continue to pervade the Great Lakes region. Relations between Rwanda and Zaire and Kenya have deteriorated. The threat of yet another violent conflict in the region persists. To help address the problems involved, I dispatched a Special Envoy, José Luis Jesus, to the region to examine with the Governments concerned how progress could be made towards a regional conference, which would address peace, security and development issues. The results of his mission were conveyed to the Security Council in my letter of 30 October. In the absence of consensus among the Governments concerned, the idea of convening a regional conference had to be put on hold and the mission of my Special Envoy ended. Although the Council has encouraged me on several occasions to pursue this question, prospects for the regional conference have not improved because of the continuing reluctance of two countries in the region.

919. However, on 28 November 1995, the Heads of State of Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda and Zaire and a representative of the United Republic of Tanzania met at Cairo in a conference organized by former United States President Jimmy Carter, the objectives of which were similar to those envisaged by the Security Council for a regional conference. A declaration was issued on 29 November, in which the parties pledged to take concrete measures to advance peace, justice, reconciliation, stability and development in the region. A second such conference was held at Tunis from 16 to 18 March 1996. Meanwhile, the former Heads of State of the Republic of Mali and the United Republic of Tanzania, General Amadou Toumani Touré and Julius Nyerere, respectively, facilitators of the Cairo summit, visited Rwanda and other countries in the region to monitor steps taken in pursuance of those meetings' recommendations.

24. Sierra Leone

920. In response to a request from the Government of Sierra Leone to exercise my good offices to facilitate negotiations between it and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), I decided to appoint Berhanu Dinka as my Special Envoy for Sierra Leone in February 1995. Since then, the Special Envoy has worked in close collaboration with OAU, the Commonwealth Secretariat and other organizations supporting negotiations in Sierra Leone. In his efforts to establish contact with the RUF leadership, he has sought and received assistance from official bodies, private individuals and non-governmental organizations in Sierra Leone and throughout the subregion. In addition to

those efforts, he has encouraged and assisted the Government in its democratization of the political process, including the transition to an elected civilian government.

921. In April 1995, the Government of Sierra Leone reaffirmed its commitment to a transition programme with the goal of holding elections by early 1996. It followed up by taking a number of important steps in support of civic organizations, such as the establishment of the Interim National Electoral Commission and the National Commission for Democracy, to promote civic and voter education in the country and to prepare for the elections. A National Consultative Conference on Elections held in August 1995 adopted the necessary rules and procedures and decided that the elections would be held on 26 February 1996.

922. In my report of 21 November 1995 to the Security Council, I outlined the efforts made by the Government and my Special Envoy in pursuit of negotiations with the RUF and in the areas of democratization, security, the socio-economic costs of the war and the humanitarian needs of the country. I informed the Council that despite all efforts to contact the RUF for a meeting or negotiations, the group's leadership had remained elusive and unresponsive. I also noted that a postponement of the elections could result in violence and halt the process of democratization altogether. I drew attention to the fact that there were some elements in Sierra Leone that were seeking to derail the electoral process, as attested by the attempted coup of 2 October.

923. In view of the conditions prevailing in the country, I instructed my Special Envoy to encourage the Government and leaders of political parties to safeguard the integrity of the process, ensuring that the elections were free and fair and that their outcome would not be contested. In a presidential statement of 27 November, the Security Council supported my efforts and those of my Special Envoy, called for an immediate end to the fighting and expressed strong support for the work of the Interim National Electoral Commission.

924. In order to encourage the Government further in its efforts towards reaching a negotiated settlement with the RUF and democratization of the political process, and in the context of the international community's renewed interest in the twin processes under way in Sierra Leone, I visited Freetown on 29 November. I was reassured by the Head of State and Chairman of the National Provisional Ruling Council, Captain Valentine Strasser, that the elections would be held on 26 February 1996, that the people of Sierra Leone supported democratization and that all arrangements were being made for the holding of the elections.

925. My Special Envoy was able to meet with RUF representatives for the first time in early December at Abidjan and Accra. He underlined to them that the international community was strongly in favour of peace talks and the elections. The RUF representatives stated their organization's readiness to enter into negotiations with the National Provisional Ruling Council under the auspices of the United Nations and to participate in elections. They also requested humanitarian assistance for people living in areas under RUF control and financial and technical assistance to help it participate in negotiations.

926. However, during December 1995, the National Provisional Ruling Council issued several decrees regulating the forthcoming elections that seemed to reduce the authority of the Interim National Electoral Commission and to favour certain political parties at the expense of others. These moves were interpreted as signalling that the Council had become less committed to the holding of free and fair elections.

927. On 16 January 1996, Brigadier-General Julius Maada Bio ousted Captain Strasser in a military coup and replaced him as Head of State and as Chairman of the National Provisional Ruling Council. Although he reassured the country of the Council's commitment to the democratic process, it became clear that elements within the Council were in favour of postponing the elections for the ostensible reason that an initiative for "peace before elections" be given a chance. On 9 February, I sent a message to Chairman Bio through my Special Envoy expressing concern that recent developments appeared to be threatening the electoral timetable.

928. However, at the insistence of the Chairman of the Interim National Electoral Commission that any postponement of the elections by the National Provisional Ruling Council be decided upon by the National Consultative Conference on Elections, Chairman Bio agreed that the latter should be convened on 12 February. Despite being advised to the contrary by the National Provisional Ruling Council and military representatives, the Consultative Conference overwhelmingly decided to retain 26 February as the election date. On 13 February, I issued a press statement in New York commending the Conference and the National Provisional Ruling Council for their commitment to continue the democratic process and called upon the RUF to refrain from disrupting the elections. In a presidential statement adopted on 15 February, the Security Council welcomed the Conference's decision, as well as the renewed promise of the National Provisional Ruling Council to abide by it, and took note that the Interim National Electoral Commission had confirmed that all necessary technical arrangements were in place for the elections to proceed.

929. At the request of the Government, the Electoral Assistance Division of the Secretariat and UNDP worked closely with the Interim National Electoral Commission to identify the technical requirements for organizing the electoral process and established a project at Freetown that was designed to coordinate international financial and technical assistance in support of the electoral process and to facilitate the activities of international observer groups. A donors' conference was held on 30 November 1995 at United Nations Headquarters. UNDP provided a Chief Technical Adviser to the Interim National Electoral Commission, two consultants and four United Nations Volunteers, who established a small secretariat to coordinate the activities of international electoral observers.

930. Parliamentary and presidential elections were duly held on 26 and 27 February 1996, followed by a second round of presidential elections on 15 March. The Joint International Observer Group, coordinated by the United Nations electoral assistance secretariat, stated that despite some intimidation by armed elements, the elections had been conducted in a correct and transparent manner. The Sierra Leone People's Party won the largest number of seats in the legislature and its leader, Al Haji Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, won the presidency in the second round. The Chairman of the National Provisional Ruling Council announced that it would hand over the Government to the newly elected Parliament and President within two weeks. President Kabbah was inaugurated on 29 March.

931. The Security Council welcomed the elections in a presidential statement adopted on 19 March and called on the RUF to accept their outcome, maintain the cease-fire and enter into a full dialogue for peace, without any conditions. Following initial contacts, representatives of the National Provisional Ruling Council and the RUF met at Abidjan at the end of February. The talks were hosted by the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, with my Special Envoy and representatives of OAU and the Commonwealth participating as facilitators. A meeting between the Chairman of the National Provisional Ruling Council, Brigadier Bio, and the RUF leader, Corporal Foday Sankoh, took place at Yamoussoukrou on 25 and 26 March, under the chairmanship of President Henri Konan Bédié of Côte d'Ivoire. In a joint communiqué, the two sides agreed that the talks should continue after the new Government took over.

932. In his inaugural address, President Kabbah expressed appreciation for the efforts made by the United Nations in support of the processes of democratization and peace in Sierra Leone. He stated that the pursuit of lasting peace would be his Government's first priority and that he would meet with Corporal Sankoh at the earliest opportunity. President Kabbah and Corporal Sankoh met at Yamoussoukrou on 23 April and agreed to a continued cessation of hostilities. They also agreed that three joint working parties would work on agreements on a peace accord, the encampment and disarmament and the demobilization and resettlement of combatants.

933. The three joint working parties held discussions from 6 to 27 May at Abidjan under the chairmanship of the Foreign Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, with my Special Envoy and the representatives of OAU and the Commonwealth again serving as facilitators. Agreement was reached on almost all articles of the draft peace accord. However, the talks reached an impasse owing to disagreement between the two sides on the question of the withdrawal of foreign troops from Sierra Leone and the encampment, disarmament and demobilization of RUF combatants on a simultaneous and equal basis.

934. Despite the concerted efforts of my Special Envoy and the Governments of neighbouring (and other) countries, the talks have remained stalled for several weeks. The RUF has also insisted on negotiating a power-sharing arrangement within the framework of the peace agreement with the Government, which maintained that it was unable to accommodate the RUF demands because of constitutional constraints.

935. An inter-agency mission to Sierra Leone led by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in August 1995 called for the United Nations to play a greater role in assuring the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance in providing greater support to the National Relief and Rehabilitation Committee of the Government of Sierra Leone. I sent Peter Hansen, then Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, to Sierra Leone in October 1995 to draw attention to the needs of the country and to review the delivery of humanitarian assistance. In November 1995, the Emergency Relief Coordinator appointed a Humanitarian Coordinator and deployed a Department of Humanitarian Affairs support team to bolster the coordination arrangements.

936. The United Nations consolidated inter-agency appeal for Sierra Leone was launched on 28 March at Freetown. The appeal sought $57 million in humanitarian assistance from donors to address the serious humanitarian crisis facing the country, and focused on four priority areas: providing life-saving assistance; facilitating returns to home areas wherever security allows; ensuring complementarity of relief and rehabilitation activities; and strengthening coordination, in particular as regards supporting the Government's emergency management capacity. As of July 1996, donors had pledged $8.9 million. The UNDP Resident Representative serves as Humanitarian Coordinator for Sierra Leone and heads the United Nations Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit, which includes a number of Sierra Leonean specialists.

937. The successful completion of parliamentary and presidential elections in February 1996 has changed the focus of humanitarian assistance. With peace talks on track, there is a growing possibility that the more than two million Sierra Leonean refugees and internally displaced persons may be returning home. As a result, relief programmes must emphasize those elements which support return. Progress in the peace process will also lead to greater access to communities in need. A coordinated approach to these new beneficiaries is essential if resources are to be used efficiently. In addition, progress in the peace process requires that demobilization activities be accelerated in earnest.

25. Somalia

938. Since my last report, the political impasse in Somalia has persisted, although all-out civil war has not resumed. The United Nations has been providing humanitarian assistance through its agencies and organizations, and has remained ready to assist with a political settlement by maintaining a Political Office for Somalia, which has been located at Nairobi for security reasons. An unsettled situation has also continued in the north-west of the country, with sporadic fighting between the Egal administration and opposition forces.

939. In August 1995, a wide range of Somali factions, with the exception of supporters of General Mohamed Aidid and Mohamed Egal, held consultations at Nairobi and agreed to work out a common political platform on the basis of which a preparatory meeting for a national reconciliation conference would be held. The conference would result in a transitional mechanism that would function as a governing authority for Somalia. General Aidid and Mr. Egal would be welcome to join in the undertaking. Further consultations among the Somali factions were held in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia, in September 1995 at the invitation of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

940. General Aidid, for his part, rejected all calls for consultations on national reconciliation, insisting that a Government had already been formed under him and that, therefore, there was no longer need for such consultations. However, his "Government" was not recognized by any Member State. In August 1995, the "disarmament" campaign of his "Government" led to intense fighting between his militia and that of Mr. Ali Mahdi, Chairman of the Somali Salvation Alliance (SSA), in Mogadishu, breaking the relative calm that had prevailed in the capital since the withdrawal of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) II in March 1995.

941. In September 1995, the forces of General Aidid occupied Baidoa. His militia looted relief supplies and equipment, as well as the grain that had been produced by the people of the region. A number of international aid workers were detained for several days and their communications equipment was looted. Mr. Ali Mahdi demanded that General Aidid withdraw from Baidoa and threatened an all-out war. No military action ensued, however, and General Aidid subsequently occupied Baidoa and Hoddur.

942. On 19 January 1996, I reported to the Security Council that the political situation in Somalia had been dominated by a debilitating stalemate for almost two years owing to the failure of the Somali faction leaders to honour the commitments made in the Nairobi Declaration of 24 March 1994. I reiterated my conviction that durable peace could not be achieved in Somalia without a process of sufficiently broad-based consultations among the Somalis themselves. I noted that it was nevertheless heartening that Member States and regional organizations had not lost interest in developments in Somalia, despite many disappointments.

943. In response to repeated requests from many Somali leaders for United Nations support for their peace initiatives, I pointed out that it was necessary for them to realize the profound sense of disappointment and even doubts about the sincerity of their desire for peace that some of their past actions had caused. Also, in view of the current financial crisis of the Organization, I counselled that their best hope of attracting such support would be to give some signs of concrete progress towards peace and reconciliation. I then informed the Council of my intention to maintain the United Nations Political Office for Somalia at Nairobi for the time being.

944. In response to my report, the Security Council, in a presidential statement of 24 January, called upon all Somali political leaders and parties to return to an inclusive process of consultation and negotiation aimed at national reconciliation leading to the establishment of a broad-based national government. The Council commended the valiant efforts of the United Nations and international humanitarian agencies and Somali personnel for their courage and determination in rendering assistance to Somalia in the face of harassment, beating, abduction and killings. The Council also reminded all States of their obligation to implement fully the general and complete arms embargo it had instituted earlier.

945. SSA factions and the United Somali Congress/Somali National Alliance (USC/SNA) led by Osman Atto welcomed my report and the statement of the Security Council and expressed support for a national reconciliation conference. They also appealed for

resumption of an active United Nations political role. The League of Arab States (LAS) offered to provide financial assistance for a reconciliation conference. A spokesman for General Aidid, however, indicated that his "Government" would attend only if he was invited as Head of Government; the other Somali leaders rejected such a condition.

946. By mid-March, the animosity between Mr. Atto and General Aidid led to military confrontations between their forces in the Merca area. Their militias also engaged in heavy fighting in April in south Mogadishu. Meanwhile, in early April, the SSA appealed for a national reconciliation conference in order to establish a government of national unity and called on General Aidid and Mr. Egal to participate in it. However, neither of them responded positively.

947. On 15 March, the Security Council held a public debate on Somalia in which a number of ideas were advanced for possible action. In a letter dated 11 April, I informed the Council that I was exploring the feasibility of a joint United Nations/OAU mission, since it might have a relatively better chance of being accepted if it were sent at the express request of the Council. On 17 April, the members of the Council generally supported my views and indicated that LAS and OIC might also join such a mission.

948. On 30 April, I met at Nairobi with a number of Somali leaders representing a wide spectrum of factions and clans, except those of General Aidid and Mr. Egal. I assured them that the United Nations would remain committed to the search for a solution to the problem in Somalia. I also referred to the Council's continued interest in Somalia and asked the Somali leaders to come up with new proposals on how the United Nations could help the reconciliation process.

949. However, a new round of three-pronged fighting broke out in Mogadishu in June and again in July, pitting General Aidid against Muse Sudi, commander of the Abgal militia in the Medina district of Mogadishu and an ally of Mr. Mahdi in that area; against Mr. Atto elsewhere in south Mogadishu; and against Mr. Mahdi on the "green line" separating north and south Mogadishu. By mid-July, the fighting had turned into sporadic exchanges of fire. However, a massive build-up of militias on all fronts was being reported, with the ever-present threat of resumed fighting. During the sporadic fighting, General Aidid was reported to have been wounded in late July and his death from his wounds was announced subsequently.

950. Messrs. Mahdi and Atto immediately declared a unilateral cease-fire and called on all Somali clans to pursue a peaceful path. They appealed to General Aidid's supporters to renounce the position that they had already established a "Government" and asked them to participate in the peaceful reunification of Somalia. However, Hussein Mohamed Aidid, a son of General Aidid who was reportedly sworn in as his father's successor, declared that he would pursue General Aidid's policies and would eliminate internal and external enemies. These developments could have important implications for the Somali political process and for national reconciliation. I have instructed the United Nations Political Office for Somalia to work with OAU, OIC, LAS and EU to develop a coordinated approach to the situation.

951. Although much progress has been made on the humanitarian front in Somalia since the acute emergency of 1991-1992, the humanitarian needs vary greatly from region to region. Where appropriate, United Nations agencies continue to undertake the delivery of humanitarian assistance, while efforts are focused upon rehabilitation and reconstruction in areas where conditions are conducive to such activities. Nevertheless, insecurity continues to hinder the pace of recovery, especially in the southern and central regions.

952. The withdrawal of United Nations military contingents from Somalia in early 1995 prompted the temporary evacuation of international personnel from Mogadishu and a number of other areas for security reasons. International agency personnel soon found conditions secure enough to return to most areas. Nevertheless, their lives have often been at risk as a result of banditry and clan-based conflict. In 1995 several humanitarian aid workers fell victim to the violence, again forcing the evacuation of international personnel and necessitating the temporary suspension of non-emergency activities in those areas until local communities could provide assurances of safety for staff and property. The fluidity of the situation in Somalia has compelled the United Nations agencies to adopt flexible approaches in their interactions with local administrations.

953. Although the situation in Somalia cannot currently be characterized as an acute emergency, the potential for a worsening humanitarian situation increased during the second half of 1995 and early 1996. Lack of access to food, or in some cases to currency required to purchase food, emerged as a major problem in some areas. Even without the resurgence of large-scale fighting, the mediocre results of the main harvest in 1995 and the disruption of commerce as a result of insecurity in southern and central Somalia presaged a decline in household resources and hence in the nutritional status of Somali children and other vulnerable groups.

954. The closure of the Mogadishu port has hindered the import of food, medicine and other relief assistance, resulting in a sharp increase in costs as agencies have found it necessary, in areas such as Mogadishu, Lower Shabelle

and the Juba valley, to rely increasingly upon air transport rather than ship or road. The convergence of all of these factors, together with marked insecurity, has meant that malnutrition and disease have re-emerged in areas that had shown significant improvements in the past.

955. Moreover, while needs are rising steadily, programmes are receiving less funding from donors. The response to the December 1994 United Nations consolidated inter-agency appeal for $70.3 million (later revised upwards to $93.2 million) for the six-month period from January to June 1995 has not been encouraging. Rather than launching another appeal, it was agreed that donors could, in the interim, continue to contribute to the January to June 1995 appeal. As of March 1996, donor contributions to the appeal totalled $28.6 million, or 30.7 per cent of the revised requirements.

956. As Somalia is a composite of differing environments, with relatively stable areas existing alongside areas of great insecurity, the development of a uniform humanitarian strategy for Somalia as a whole is not possible. While a flexible strategy is being formulated, United Nations agencies and organizations are attempting to engage in contingency planning, including rapid needs assessments, and, where funds permit, stockpiling of food and medical supplies. All of these efforts, it is hoped, will help to prevent the recurrence of a crisis on the scale of 1991-1992, and will protect the gains made over the past three years.

26. Sudan

957. On 31 January 1996, following its consideration of a letter from the Government of Ethiopia dated 9 January, the Security Council adopted resolution 1044 (1996), which addressed the assassination attempt on President Hosni Mubarak of the Arab Republic of Egypt in Addis Ababa on 26 June 1995. As requested by the Council, I endeavoured to seek, in consultation with OAU, the cooperation of the Government of the Sudan in the implementation of that resolution. On 6 February, I informed the Council of my decision to send my Special Adviser, Under-Secretary-General Chinmaya R. Gharekhan, as my Special Envoy to the area to conduct the requisite consultations and to gather relevant information so as to carry out the mandate entrusted to me. In a letter to me dated 8 February, the President of the Council indicated that the Council welcomed and supported my decision.

958. In the course of his mission, which lasted from 18 February to 2 March, my Special Envoy held consultations with the Secretary-General of OAU at Addis Ababa and met with the authorities in Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Sudan, Tunisia and Uganda. My Special Envoy has continued his contacts with the Secretary-General of OAU and has been informed that the question of what further action the latter might take was under consideration.

959. In my report of 11 March pursuant to resolution 1044 (1996), I observed that in view of the situation as ascertained during the trip of my Special Envoy, it was obvious that the Sudan had not yet complied with the demands of the Security Council and that all the neighbouring countries visited by my Special Envoy had accused the Sudan of supporting terrorist activities within their territories.

960. Following the adoption of Security Council resolution 1054 (1996), I transmitted the text on 29 April to the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of all Member States. On 15 May, I addressed a note verbale to all Member States drawing particular attention to paragraphs 3, 5 and 6 of the resolution. The Secretariat also made contact, as appropriate, with Member States directly concerned with this matter.

961. In a report to the Security Council dated 10 July, I presented information submitted by the Member States. From the information reviewed in that report it could be seen that (a) while the Council had determined that the three suspects involved were sheltered in the Sudan and had called on the Government of the Sudan to ensure their extradition, the Government claimed that its investigations concerning two of the suspects had produced no trace of their presence in the Sudan and that the identity of the third suspect was unknown; and (b) while the Council had demanded that the Sudan desist from engaging in activities of assisting, supporting and facilitating terrorist activities and from giving shelter and sanctuary to terrorist elements, the Government had asserted that it condemned terrorism and did not condone terrorist activities.

962. I intend to keep in close contact with all parties concerned and with the Secretary-General of OAU on all aspects of resolutions 1044 (1996) and 1054 (1996). I shall also keep the Security Council informed of all relevant developments relating to this difficult situation.

27. Tajikistan

963. The situation in Tajikistan has remained unstable and the agreement on a temporary cease-fire, which was concluded in Tehran in September 1994 and has been extended several times, was frequently violated by both sides. Indeed, the opposition carried its fight with the government forces into the centre of the country and established control over parts of Tavildara. The Joint Commission established to ensure the implementation of the Tehran agreement did not function for four months,

following the abduction, on 24 February 1996, of its Co-Chairman, a representative of the opposition. In addition to the conflict between the Government and the opposition, there was also unrest in several cities in the west and north of the country over economic and political issues.

964. The small United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) continued its best efforts to maintain the cease-fire. It carried out investigations, either on its own or in cooperation with the Joint Commission and provided administrative support to the Commission. Operating from field stations in the centre and south of the country, UNMOT teams maintained an active schedule of patrols and contacts with government officials and opposition representatives with the objective of helping to reduce friction and, where possible, to resolve local problems.

965. My Special Envoy, Ramiro Píriz-Ballón, pursued efforts to mediate in the political dialogue between the Government of Tajikistan and the opposition to achieve progress towards national reconciliation. In early August he conducted indirect talks between President Emomali Rakhmonov and the opposition leader, Abdullo Nuri, shuttling between Dushanbe and Kabul. The negotiations concluded with the signing by the two leaders, at Dushanbe and Kabul, respectively, of a protocol on the fundamental principles for establishing peace and national accord in Tajikistan. The two sides agreed to work for a comprehensive political solution of the conflict and concluded that further negotiations should result in the signing of a general agreement.

966. The two sides also agreed to extend the Agreement on a Temporary Cease-fire and the Cessation of Other Hostile Acts on the Tajik-Afghan Border and Within the Country for another six months, until 26 February 1996. Concurring with my Special Envoy's proposal to modify the format of the inter-Tajik negotiations, they agreed to resume the talks in a continuous round beginning 18 September 1995. In a presidential statement, the Security Council welcomed the signing of the protocol and the extension of the cease-fire.

967. The first phase of the continuous round of inter-Tajik negotiations took place at Ashgabat from 30 November to 22 December 1995. The delay in their resumption was caused by differences between the two Tajik parties on the issue of venue. At the beginning of the talks, the two sides adopted a joint statement reaffirming their commitment to the cease-fire. However, fighting escalated in the Tavildara region and my Special Envoy interrupted the talks to visit Moscow for consultations with officials of the Russian Federation in order to facilitate the cessation of fighting. After the restoration of the truce and the resumption of the talks, political problems were discussed in detail. However, the inflexible positions of the two sides prevented real progress. In its resolution 1030 (1995) of 14 December, the Security Council extended the mandate of UNMOT for another six months, until 15 June 1996, and emphasized the need for the Tajik parties to take the opportunity of the continuous round of talks at Ashgabat to reach a general agreement that would restore peace and national accord in Tajikistan.

968. Despite the agreement reached at Ashgabat to resume the next phase of negotiations on 15 January 1996, the negotiating process stalled once again. My Special Envoy undertook consultations in Moscow from 17 to 24 January with President Rakhmonov, Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov of the Russian Federation and Foreign Minister Boris Shikhmuradov of Turkmenistan during the CIS summit, in an attempt to revitalize the process. Agreement was reached to resume the talks on 26 January.

969. The second phase of the continuous round of inter-Tajik talks at Ashgabat took place from 26 January to 18 February. As I reported to the Security Council on 22 March, the two parties continued difficult discussions on the core political problems and on compromise proposals presented by my Special Envoy. The delegation of the Government endorsed the proposals as a basis for future talks, although the opposition delegation had a number of substantive reservations. As a result of the negotiations, the Ashgabat Declaration was signed and included an important agreement on holding a special session of the Parliament with the participation of opposition leaders.

970. The peace process faced another serious challenge after the opposition Co-Chairman of the Joint Commission was abducted in Dushanbe on 24 February. The cease-fire agreement expired two days later. Under the circumstances, I requested my Special Adviser, Ismat Kittani, to undertake consultations with the opposition leaders and the Government. As a result of his talks at Tehran and Dushanbe, the cease-fire agreement was unconditionally extended until 26 May 1996. The Parliament of Tajikistan, during its special session on 11 March, confirmed the commitment of the Government to seek a solution to the conflict through political dialogue with the opposition. Regrettably, the opposition declined to participate in the special session because of security concerns arising from the Co-Chairman's abduction. In its presidential statement of 29 March, the Security Council expressed regret at the insufficient progress achieved during the continuous round of inter-Tajik talks at Ashgabat and called upon the Tajik parties to comply strictly with the cease-fire agreement.

971. Following the return of my Special Envoy to his country's diplomatic service, I appointed Gerd Merrem as my Special Representative, residing in Dushanbe. Mr.

Merrem undertook his first mission to the region, including Moscow, Ashgabat, Dushanbe and Tehran, from 7 to 20 May. He had talks with President Rakhmonov and the opposition leader Mr. Nuri, and with the Foreign Ministers of the countries serving as observers to the inter-Tajik talks. The cease-fire agreement was extended for another three months, until 26 August.

972. Mr. Merrem's mission coincided with the beginning of a large-scale offensive undertaken by the opposition forces in the Tavildara region. In a presidential statement on 21 May, the Security Council condemned the violations of the cease-fire, in particular by the opposition. The Council also expressed concern about restrictions being placed on UNMOT's freedom of movement, in particular by the Government, and called for the earliest possible resumption of the inter-Tajik talks.

973. With the situation in Tavildara a continuing cause for concern, another round of inter-Tajik talks opened at Ashgabat on 8 July under the auspices of my Special Representative. On 19 July, the leaders of the two Tajik delegations signed a joint statement on the restoration of an effective cease-fire and the extension of the Tehran Agreement until 31 December. In accordance with the Agreement, which was to come into effect at 0600 GMT on 20 July, the sides were to remain in the positions they had occupied at the time of the signing and UNMOT was to verify the positions of the two sides in the Tavildara area. On 21 July, the two sides also signed an agreement on prisoner exchanges, which were to take place by 20 August. In a joint communiqué, there was also agreement on an intensified schedule for future meetings and consultations in order to reach agreements on key interrelated political and military issues. The two sides also agreed to resume the negotiations in the near future in order to discuss the main political issues.

974. I should like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Government of Turkmenistan for the outstanding assistance it has provided to this effort through its hosting of the latest rounds of inter-Tajik talks.

975. Regrettably, the agreements concluded in July have not been implemented so far. At the time of reporting, fighting continued in the Tavildara area, confirming that there is now a continuing, and almost chronic, emergency situation in Tajikistan, which requires intervention by the international community. The country faces massive unemployment, accompanied by poverty and starvation. Malaria, tuberculosis and diphtheria pose a serious threat to health and lack of fuel and energy has led to serious health and hygiene risks. Since gas supplies are irregular during the harsh winter months, homes and public buildings are often unheated. Water is untreated and contaminated by various pathogens. Deteriorating public services, such as transport, electricity generation and communications, have also contributed to the rapidly declining standards of living, and the average per capita income in 1995 was by far the lowest in the newly independent States of the former Soviet Union.

976. Humanitarian assistance efforts in Tajikistan have been carried out by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO and WFP. Aid was provided in the form of food, agricultural inputs, clothing, shelter, educational materials, medicines, vaccines and expert services in various areas. Other important areas of assistance have been water and sanitation, public transport, public administration and governance, small enterprise development and energy.

The former Yugoslavia

977. Since my last annual report to the General Assembly, the political situation in the former Yugoslavia has changed dramatically; many of these changes are for the better. The United Nations, in conjunction with other interested parties, remains committed to finding a long-term solution to the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. However, political realities on the ground have warranted a departure from the past approach to peace-keeping in the area and new strategies have been adopted, as necessary. These have included the restructuring of the components of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), the umbrella mission in the theatre, whose elements were either made independent or closed down.

978. In the late summer and autumn of 1995, the apparent determination of the parties to achieve a military solution to the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, following the expiration of the December 1994 cessation-of-hostilities agreement, created an unprecedented level of military activity, as mentioned in my last annual report. This resulted in large-scale movements of refugees and displaced persons and in widespread violations of international humanitarian law by all forces, but in particular by the Bosnian Serbs. UNPROFOR faced serious impediments in implementing its mandate in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

979. Following the mortar attack on Sarajevo's Markale market place on 28 August 1995, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), at the request of and in agreement with the Force Commander of the United Nations Peace Forces (UNPF), conducted air strikes against Bosnian Serb anti-aircraft systems and heavy weapons in the vicinity of Sarajevo, as well as against ammunition supply depots and other military facilities throughout eastern Bosnia. The air strikes aimed at restoring the heavy weapons exclusion zone

around Sarajevo and deterring any further attacks on safe areas. During the operation, mortars and artillery of the UNPROFOR rapid reaction force engaged Bosnian Serb targets in the area of Sarajevo. These actions, prefigured in the London Conference of July 1995, had become possible as a result of the withdrawal of United Nations peace-keepers from the Serb-surrounded enclaves of Srebrenica, Žepa and Goražde, which had rendered the United Nations force less vulnerable to hostage taking.

980. Soon after NATO began air operations in eastern Bosnia, Bosnian government and Bosnian Croat forces began to advance in the western part of the country, capturing areas traditionally populated by Bosnian Serbs. As a result of this and the fighting around Sarajevo, the Muslim-Croat Federation increased its holding of land from 30 per cent to just over 50 per cent of the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This also led to another major flow of displaced persons. As fighting was raging, the United States actively pursued a peace initiative it had begun during the summer.

981. On 5 October 1995, the United States delegation secured a country-wide cease-fire agreement that included non-military provisions, such as humane treatment for detained persons, freedom of movement and the right of displaced persons to return to their homes. UNPROFOR military and civilian personnel immediately undertook various measures to ensure the successful implementation of the cease-fire agreement, including demining activities necessary for the repair and reopening of Sarajevo's utilities. The Chief of Mission of UNPROFOR conducted the negotiations that led to the entry into force of the cease-fire on 12 October.

982. The revitalization of the peace process, coupled with Bosnian Serb military reverses, brought about enhanced compliance by the parties with the cease-fire and allowed UNPROFOR to carry out its mandate in Bosnia and Herzegovina far more effectively. Other developments that enhanced the Mission's ability to operate were President Slobodan Milošević's assumption of authority to conduct negotiations on behalf of the Republika Srpska and the deterrent effect of the use of NATO air power and the rapid reaction force in August and September.

983. The political situation improved with the conclusion of a series of agreements, most notably the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, at Dayton, Ohio, on 21 November 1995. The Peace Agreement was initialled by the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. While the talks were under way, a number of non-NATO countries, including the Russian Federation, agreed to participate in the implementation of the Bosnian peace plan. The United Nations, it should be noted, was not represented at Dayton.

984. On 8 and 9 December, I attended the Peace Implementation Conference held at Lancaster House, London, aimed at mobilizing the international community in support of a new start for the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Conference, which preceded the signing of the Peace Agreement in Paris on 14 December, reached several conclusions on, *inter alia*, the establishment of a Peace Implementation Council and its Steering Board, assignment of responsibility for the various aspects of implementation and the appointment of Carl Bildt as High Representative. Issues of regional stabilization, humanitarian assistance, refugees and prisoners, protection of human rights, elections, reconstruction, relations between the States of the former Yugoslavia and the rest of the international community and the question of Eastern Slavonia were also addressed. The Conference also decided that the Peace Implementation Council would subsume the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, which was dissolved on 31 January 1996.

985. Other steps forward were the signing, on 13 September 1995, of the Interim Accord between Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the signing on 12 November 1995 of the Basic Agreement on the Region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium. The latter agreement sought the peaceful reintegration of that Serb-held territory into the Republic of Croatia.

986. Following the conclusion of the above-mentioned agreements, the United Nations presence in the former Yugoslavia was altered considerably. United Nations operations in the former Yugoslavia now consist of four separate missions: the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH), the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES), the United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka (UNMOP) and the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, as well as two liaison offices at Belgrade and Zagreb.

987. To coordinate the complex activities associated with winding up the old missions and establishing three new ones, and to ensure a smooth transfer of responsibilities from the United Nations to the Implementation Force (IFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, I appointed Kofi Annan, Under-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping Operations, on a temporary basis as my Special Representative in the Former Yugoslavia on 1 November 1995. He established his headquarters at Zagreb, alongside

the United Nations Peace Forces (UNPF) headquarters. Upon his departure on 29 February 1996, a small Transition Office for the Former Yugoslavia took over responsibility for the liquidation of the former UNPF mission and for the continued provision of common support services to the four successor operations.

Shared responsibilities

28. Bosnia and Herzegovina

988. With the signing of the Peace Agreement, the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina entered into a new phase of shared responsibilities between the United Nations and other segments of the international community. By its resolution 1031 (1995) of 15 December 1995, the Security Council authorized the establishment of an Implementation Force (IFOR) with responsibility for ensuring compliance with the military aspects of the Peace Agreement; decided to terminate the mandate of UNPROFOR and to transfer its authority to IFOR; and endorsed the appointment of a High Representative. Consequently, in keeping with provisions of the Peace Agreement, the United Nations role in the new configuration was limited to two key tasks: the International Police Task Force and the return of refugees and displaced persons.

989. The transfer of authority between UNPF and IFOR took place on 20 December 1995. The UNPF Force Commander became the Deputy Commander of IFOR, but retained his UNPF authority during the transitional period. The arrangement of having the UNPF Force Commander serve simultaneously as Deputy Commander of IFOR facilitated the coordination of the withdrawal of UNPROFOR contingents with the arrival of IFOR elements. By the date of the transfer of authority, a number of UNPROFOR troops had already left the theatre as part of a restructuring exercise and, of the approximately 21,000 UNPROFOR troops that remained, about 18,500 were designated to stay on as part of IFOR.

990. To provide policy direction, a Steering Committee on Transition of Responsibilities in the Former Yugoslavia was established. Composed of United Nations civilian and military personnel and the NATO Liaison Officer to UNPF, it assisted the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in matters pertaining to United Nations agencies and programmes involved in implementing the Dayton Agreement, as well as the transition of responsibilities from UNPROFOR to IFOR. UNPROFOR also supported IFOR by transferring most of its infrastructure, equipment and assets. The success of the entire process, which could serve as a model for United Nations cooperation with regional organizations elsewhere, reflected good preparatory work at every level of command and the willingness of both the United Nations and NATO to ensure a smooth transfer of authority.

991. Antonio Pedauye was appointed Interim United Nations Coordinator from 5 to 31 January 1996. He was replaced by Iqbal Riza, who was appointed my Special Representative and Coordinator of the United Nations Operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 1 February. Mr. Riza's task is to exercise authority over the International Police Task Force and United Nations civilian office and to coordinate other United Nations activities, including those relating to humanitarian relief and refugees, demining, human rights and economic rehabilitation. He also coordinates with the High Representative and with other international organizations on the ground.

992. The mandate of the International Police Task Force is to monitor law enforcement activities and facilities; to advise and train law enforcement personnel and forces; and to advise the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the organization of effective law enforcement agencies. The Task Force is not mandated to engage in enforcement activities, and it is for this reason that the police are unarmed, as is customary in other United Nations civilian police missions.

993. The Commissioner of the Task Force, Peter Fitzgerald, arrived in theatre on 29 January. He established his headquarters at Sarajevo, with regional headquarters at Sarajevo, Banja Luka and Tuzla. The Security Council authorized the deployment of 1,721 civilian police officers, to be fully deployed by the end of April. Some 2,000 officers were offered by Member States, but few were able to respond quickly to the request for immediate deployment because most had to be released from ordinary duty in their home countries. As at 31 July, the International Police Task Force had 1,676 police officers deployed or awaiting deployment in 52 locations. Because the officers are unarmed and spread throughout the country, they must rely on IFOR and the local authorities for security.

994. In addition to monitoring, observing and inspecting the law enforcement activities of local authorities, a major responsibility of the International Police Task Force is to assist the parties in planning the reduction, restructuring and training of their own police forces. Agreement on the reduction of the Federation Police from 20,000 to 11,500 and its reorganization was reached on 26 April and the process has proceeded generally on schedule. A parallel reduction is under discussion with the Republika Srpska authorities.

995. The civil affairs component of UNMIBH follows that of UNPROFOR. Forty-four civil affairs officers are in the field, stationed in offices co-located with the International Police Task Force. The officers are engaged

in supporting the Force, reporting on and assessing political and human rights developments, and using their good offices to promote confidence between the entities and to resolve problems between the parties. In addition, civil affairs officers work in close coordination with the Office of the High Representative and with other international organizations, especially UNHCR, IFOR and OSCE. They provide those organizations with information and assessments related to key areas of implementation, especially on political trends affecting such issues as freedom of movement, respect for human rights and repatriation of refugees and displaced persons.

996. At the beginning of January, tension increased in the divided city of Mostar. Hostile actions by both ethnic communities resulted in a number of casualties among the local population. Concerted efforts by EU, the international community and my representatives calmed the situation and municipal elections were held on 30 June. The Bosnian Croat community did not accept the results of the elections and as a result the future of Mostar was uncertain, with wider implications for the future of the Muslim-Croat Federation. This uncertainty threw into doubt the continued presence of the EU and the Western European Union police monitors in Mostar. The International Police Task Force, therefore, prepared to assume civilian police responsibilities in the city in the event of an EU withdrawal.

997. UNHCR, as the lead agency for the coordination of humanitarian relief and the return of refugees and displaced persons, has planned a voluntary and phased return of displaced persons and refugees. So far, some 70,000 people have returned to their homes. Voluntary return depends on security conditions, however, which are in turn contingent upon implementation of the military aspects of the Dayton Agreement, and on economic factors such as the availability of shelter, schools, water and other infrastructure. In May, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimated that only a quarter of the 2 million refugees and displaced persons would be able to return by the end of the year. In order to facilitate the process, UNHCR has organized bus services between the entities (i.e. the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska) to provide an opportunity for refugees to visit their homes. This endeavour still faces serious difficulties, however, owing to lack of cooperation from the parties.

998. The return of refugees and displaced persons is closely linked to the issue of elections, the organization and supervision of which, under the Dayton Agreement, are the responsibility of OSCE. The elections are due to take place on 14 September. A seven-member OSCE Provisional Electoral Commission, comprising also representatives of the three sides, was appointed on 30 January. Although conditions on the ground are far from perfect, the electoral campaign in all parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina has commenced. Local elections were held at Mostar on 30 June under the supervision of the EU Administrator. The resignation of Radovan Karadžić from the posts of President of the Republica Srpska and Chairman of the Serbian Democratic Party as a result of efforts by the High Representative, OSCE and the United States removed a major obstacle to the 14 September polls.

999. Participants in the Florence meeting of the Peace Implementation Council, held on 13 and 14 June, conducted a mid-term review of progress in the implementation of the Peace Agreement. The Council focused on its civilian aspects, calling upon the parties to work for genuine fulfilment of all its provisions and for the international community to assist them in that endeavour.

1000. On 16 November 1995, the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia issued indictments against Bosnian Serb leaders Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić for their direct and individual responsibilities for the atrocities committed against the Bosnian Muslim population of Srebrenica in July 1995 after the fall of the enclave to Bosnian Serb forces. On 11 July 1996, the International Tribunal issued international warrants for Radovan Karadžić and General Mladić. It is imperative that the Prosecutor of the International Tribunal be provided with the ability and powers to gather the necessary evidence effectively and swiftly in a form that can be presented in court. Moreover, States have an obligation to take the actions needed to create the conditions essential for the Tribunal to perform the task for which it has been created and to bring all indicted criminals to justice.

1001. The strengthening of the Federation is a cornerstone of the Peace Agreement. In that regard, I have welcomed agreements, reached in Washington on 14 May 1996, relating to the basic governance of the Federation, including such fundamental questions as the defence law, economic and political structure, media freedom and preparations for upcoming elections. However, while there appears to be full support at the intergovernmental level, the Federation will require constant commitment at the local level if it is to function as one of the two pillars of the Peace Agreement.

1002. Meanwhile, the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina still provokes serious concern. Despite encouraging results in the implementation of the military aspects of the Agreement, serious efforts are required to achieve progress in other areas. Restrictions on freedom of movement and the intolerance demonstrated by all parties remain serious obstacles to the process of reconciliation and reconstruction. The peace process has not yet become

irreversible. A real danger remains that the country will be partitioned along ethnic lines and that this could lead to resumption of hostilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Joint efforts by the international community and the genuine cooperation of all parties are required to restore the multi-ethnic character of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to overcome the pain and hatred built up over the past four years.

1003. After more than three years' experience of international efforts to control and resolve this conflict, it would be wrong to underestimate the difficulties that still lie ahead in the negotiation of the further arrangements envisaged in the Peace Agreement. But I believe that today there may be credible prospects for a viable and lasting peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, provided that all parties are at last ready to cooperate in its implementation.

29. Croatia

1004. On 12 November 1995, the Government of Croatia and the local Serb authorities in the former Sector East signed the Basic Agreement on the Region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium, which assigned the prominent role of governing the region to the United Nations. By its resolution 1025 (1995) of 30 November, the Security Council decided that the mandate of the United Nation Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia, to be known as UNCRO, would terminate by 15 January 1996 or when the Council decided on the deployment of the UNTAES. As part of the restructuring of the United Nations presence in the former Yugoslavia, the command and control of UNCRO military operations in Sector East was transferred on 1 December 1995 from UNCRO to UNPF headquarters. UNCRO was subsequently terminated by the Security Council as at 15 January.

1005. As a result of that decision, all United Nations military units and their accompanying civilian components, including UNCRO political and humanitarian officers and United Nations civilian police, departed from the former Sectors West, North and South in Croatia. The international community's ability to monitor the human rights and humanitarian situation in those areas has accordingly been drastically reduced. United Nations personnel responsible for that task are currently limited to a small team of officers from UNHCR and two human rights officers from the Centre for Human Rights, working in support of the Special Rapporteur and the Expert on Missing Persons. The last civil affairs personnel were withdrawn from the former sectors on 17 January.

1006. Notwithstanding the United Nations diminished capacity to monitor the human rights situation in Croatia, I submitted, pursuant to Security Council resolution 1019 (1995) of 9 November, two reports to the Council on this matter in February and June. In keeping with the request by the Council in its presidential statement of 23 February, information for the reports was compiled by the field operation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and other sources, including the European Community Monitoring Mission (ECMM), UNHCR, ICRC and independent human rights organizations. The general thrust of my assessment of the situation of human rights in Croatia is that all evidence indicates that the Croatian authorities have so far failed to implement effective measures to safeguard the rights of the local Serb population and to ensure their well-being.

30. United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES)

1007. On 15 January, the Security Council, by its resolution 1037 (1996), authorized the creation of the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES), for an initial period of 12 months, with the overall responsibility of helping the parties implement the Basic Agreement. The Council also urged Member States, acting nationally or in concert with regional organizations, to take all the necessary measures, including close air support, to defend or help UNTAES withdraw if necessary, and requested UNTAES on its part to cooperate with IFOR and the High Representative, Carl Bildt. The Council also decided that the military component of UNTAES would consist of a force with an initial deployment of up to 5,000 troops.

1008. UNTAES has responsibility for supervising and assisting the demilitarization of the region as provided for in the Basic Agreement; overseeing the return of refugees and displaced persons to their homes; establishing and training a temporary police force to build professionalism among the police and confidence among all ethnic communities; monitoring treatment of offenders and the prison system; organizing elections for all local government bodies; maintaining international monitors along the international borders of the region to facilitate the free movement of persons across existing borders; restoring the normal functioning of public services in the region; monitoring the parties' commitment to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms; cooperating with the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in the task of investigating and prosecuting war crimes; and promoting the realization of the commitment made in the Basic Agreement between Croatia and the local Serb authorities to the overall maintenance of peace and security.

1009. The Security Council agreed, on 17 January, to the appointment of Jacques Klein as the Transitional Administrator in Eastern Slavonia with overall responsibility and authority for the civilian and military components of the Mission. On 13 February, the Security Council agreed to my appointment of Major-General Jozef Schoups as the Force Commander.

1010. Implementation of the UNTAES mandate is progressing, albeit after a somewhat slow start. The parties to the Basic Agreement continue to stress their willingness to cooperate with UNTAES, even though at the outset they seemed to vary their interpretation of the Agreement to suit their own needs and expectations. The general destruction of infrastructure, coupled with the lack of a budget and slow deployment of troops and police, also hampered progress and made setting up the Mission more difficult than anticipated.

1011. The deployment of the military component of UNTAES was completed on 5 May; the total military strength having almost reached its authorized strength of 5,000 combat troops and support units. As authorized by the Security Council in its resolution 1037 (1996), arrangements were made with NATO and IFOR to provide UNTAES with close air support, should it be required.

1012. Despite the administrative and logistical problems, the Transitional Administrator, in consultation with both parties, was able to establish on schedule the Joint Implementation Committees called for in the Basic Agreement. Those Committees, which include representatives from international agencies, address a range of concerns: police, civil administration, restoration of public services, education and culture, return of refugees and displaced persons, human rights, elections and records.

1013. UNTAES has an authorized strength of 600 United Nations civilian police, of whom 442 were in the mission area as at 31 July. Progress has been made in the training of a temporary police force consisting of Croatian and local Serb police officers. The local Transitional Police Force was established on 1 July 1996 and will have an estimated strength of 1,300 personnel. Selected officers from both sides are being trained at the International Law Enforcement Academy at Budapest, with the assistance of United Nations civilian police monitors and the United States International Crime Investigation and Training Assistance Project. The Transitional Police Force now has primary responsibility for the maintenance of law and order, operating under the authority of the Transitional Administrator and monitored by United Nations civilian police.

1014. With regard to the restoration of public services, the Belgrade-Zagreb highway and the Adriatic pipeline were reopened on 7 May and mail service between areas under UNTAES administration and the rest of Croatia resumed on 14 May after a four-year disruption.

1015. To facilitate the work of the civil affairs component of UNTAES, which has responsibility for the Joint Implementation Committees and contact with local officials and the general public, five regional offices were established, in Beli Monastir, Osijek, Vukovar (city), Vinkovci and Ilok. The civil affairs component now consists of 44 civil affairs officers, 17 of whom operate from headquarters at Vukovar, while the remaining 27 operate from the field offices. Civil affairs has responsibility for staffing, chairing and coordinating the 15 operational Joint Implementation Committees and subcommittees in the areas of public service, education and culture, civil administration and human rights. The Schedule and Procedures for the Demilitarization of the Region of Eastern Slavonia were signed on 15 April.

1016. This process, which was to last no more than 30 days, entailed the disarmament and demobilization of all military, paramilitary and police forces, units and personnel, as well as the elimination of all their command structures. It was completed on 20 June, by which date all heavy weapons belonging to the local Serbs had either been removed from the region or handed over to UNTAES. An international inspection team was formed by UNTAES headquarters, including a representative from Headquarters in New York, to confirm that the demilitarization had been carried out. Comprehensive inspections of all known and suspected military/police locations took place between 24 and 27 June 1996. On 27 June a Certificate of Demilitarization was signed at UNTAES headquarters at Vukovar between Major-General Schoups, UNTAES Force Commander, and General Loncar, Commander of the Baranja-Eastern Slavonia Corps.

1017. However, there has been little handing over of small arms or ammunition. While many of these may have been removed from the region, it is likely that considerable quantities have stayed in private hands. As a result of the anxiety felt by some residents of the region about long-term security, UNTAES has developed a procedure for registering non-military weapons of persons entitled to hold them.

1018. The UNTAES military component established observation posts in the zone of separation between the Croatian and Serb forces prior to and during the process of demilitarization and monitored demining efforts by the parties. UNTAES soldiers have also provided support in preventing the illegal removal of resources from the region, such as cut timber, and on 14 May, they assumed control of the strategic Djeletovci oilfield.

1019. An electoral survey mission was undertaken by the Electoral Assistance Division in April and a needs

assessment mission went to the region from 13 to 21 July. The purpose of the needs assessment mission was, *inter alia*, to discuss and assess the conditions for the organization of elections with the Transitional Administrator of UNTAES and relevant Croatian and Serb authorities; to assess the overall framework for the organization of elections and to prepare a detailed timetable for the elections; to review the existing legal framework and assess the potential need to revise the legislation; to prepare the overall budget; and to design the composition of the electoral component of the operation.

1020. In a period of less than 12 months, UNTAES has achieved significant progress in the implementation of its mandate. This progress has not been without pitfalls and difficulties. Since the closure of the Djeletovci oil field on 16 April, lack of revenue has confronted public services with a critical shortage of funds. This problem was further compounded by delays in reaching an agreement with the Croatian authorities on the identification of funding for the local administration and public services, as requested by the Security Council.

31. United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka (UNMOP)

1021. On 30 September 1992, the Presidents of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia signed a joint declaration reaffirming their agreement to the demilitarization of the Prevlaka peninsula. Since the completion of the withdrawal of the Yugoslav Army from the area in October 1992, United Nations military observers (then under UNPROFOR) have been stationed in the area.

1022. In my report to the Security Council of 23 November 1995, I observed that the situation around the Prevlaka peninsula had remained stable, although there had been provocations on both sides, and I noted that the presence of United Nations military observers in both the Prevlaka and Dubrovnik areas had contributed to controlling tensions. I also noted that the Government of Croatia had not agreed to the continuation of UNCRO functions in Croatia, except perhaps in the monitoring of the demilitarization of the Prevlaka peninsula as a confidence-building measure.

1023. By its resolution 1038 (1996) of 15 January 1996, the Security Council authorized United Nations military observers to continue monitoring the demilitarization of the area for a period of three months, to be extended for an additional period of three months upon a report by the Secretary-General that such an extension would continue to contribute to the decrease of tension there.

1024. In my report of 6 February, I informed the Security Council of my intention to maintain 28 United Nations military observers in the Prevlaka area, under the command and direction of a Chief Military Observer, reporting directly to United Nations Headquarters in New York. Subsequently, on 12 March, I reported that the United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka (UNMOP) had become a separate mission. By a letter of 14 March, the President of the Council informed me of the latter's concurrence that the mandate of UNMOP should continue in accordance with paragraph 1 of resolution 1038 (1996), and of the request by the Council that I submit a further report to it, pursuant to paragraph 2 of the resolution, before the expiration of the current mandate.

1025. In my report of 27 June, I noted that the situation in the Prevlaka area had improved. The assessment was made in view of the withdrawal of Croatian military personnel and the partial removal of mines in the United Nations-controlled zone on the Croatian side of the border, together with the withdrawal of heavy weapons and easing of restrictions of movement on both sides of the border. While recognizing that the UNMOP presence in the Prevlaka peninsula could not continue indefinitely, I expressed the view that if it were to be removed prematurely, one or the other party could seek to fill the vacuum. Military tension created by its departure would be prejudicial to political negotiations by both sides. Bearing this in mind, as well as the request by both Governments for the continuation of the mandate of UNMOP, I recommended that the mandate be extended for a period of three months, until 15 October 1996, pending the outcome of the negotiations between the parties. By its resolution 1066 (1996) of 15 July, the Security Council authorized the United Nations military observers to continue monitoring the demilitarization of the Prevlaka peninsula until 15 January 1997.

32. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

1026. Since my last report to the Assembly, continued peace and stability in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have confirmed the important role being played by the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP). That role has been complemented by the Interim Accord, which was signed between Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia under the good offices of my Personal Envoy, Cyrus Vance, on 13 September 1995. Since then, both countries have continued to exchange views in the context of article 5 of the Interim Accord, and have agreed to continue their direct discussions under Mr. Vance's good offices at mutually convenient dates pursuant to Security Council

resolution 845 (1993). Representatives of the two countries last met on 11 July 1996.

1027. After considering my report of 23 November 1995, the Security Council, by its resolution 1027 (1995) of 30 November, decided to extend the mandate of UNPREDEP for a period of six months, terminating on 30 May 1996. In so doing, the Council, while acknowledging the positive role being played by UNPREDEP, was mindful of its concern about possible developments that could undermine confidence and stability in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. An assassination attempt on President Kiro Gligorov on 3 October 1995 had underlined the country's political fragility. As requested by the Security Council in its resolution 1027 (1995), I submitted a further report on 30 January 1996, in which I detailed developments on the ground and other circumstances affecting the mandate of the mission, as well as pertinent developments in the region.

1028. Based on that report and on my letter of 6 February to the President of the Security Council, the Council adopted resolution 1046 (1996) of 13 February, authorizing an increase in the strength of UNPREDEP by 50 military personnel in order to provide a continued engineering capability to support its operations. The Council also approved the establishment of the position of Force Commander of UNPREDEP and requested that I submit a further report with recommendations on the composition, strength and mandate of the Mission.

1029. On 1 February, the Security Council concurred in principle with my recommendation that UNPREDEP become an independent mission without change to its mandate, strength or composition of forces. Consequently, I redesignated the Chief of Mission, Henryk J. Sokalski, as my Special Representative for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and appointed Brigadier-General Bo Wranker (Sweden) as the Force Commander.

1030. UNPREDEP, pursuant to its mandate, continues to contribute to the maintenance of peace and stability in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Its tasks include preventive deployment, good offices, measures to build confidence, early warning, fact-finding, monitoring and reporting, as well as selected social and developmental projects. Since the termination of the activities of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, UNPREDEP undertakes tasks in areas where it once cooperated with the Conference and its various working groups.

1031. The Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia holds that the continued presence of the mission is required to maintain its country's stability. On 8 April, the Government put forward arguments for an extension of the mission in a letter to me outlining the sensitive phase of implementation of the Dayton Agreement; the potential regional threats, especially Kosovo, in the immediate proximity of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and the non-demarcation of the border line with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; inadequate defensive capabilities while the country's efforts to join collective security arrangements remained ongoing; and the role of UNPREDEP in the process of establishing democratic structures and policies of good neighbourliness.

1032. In my report of 23 May pursuant to resolution 1046 (1996), I informed the Security Council of the positive role being played by UNPREDEP. I noted, however, that its role, like that of all peace-keeping operations at this time of financial crisis, must be rigorously examined with a view to determining whether its mandate was still required and, if so, whether that mandate could be executed with fewer resources. I also noted that while there might still exist some threats to the stability of the country, such threats had diminished and were certainly much less than they had been in November 1992, when I had recommended a preventive deployment. Nevertheless I took the view that it would be imprudent to withdraw UNPREDEP and I recommended to the Security Council that the mandate of the force, and its configuration, be extended for a further six months. The Council, by its resolution 1058 (1996) of 30 May, decided to extend the mandate for a period terminating on 30 November, with the proviso that I keep it regularly informed of any developments on the ground and other circumstances affecting the mandate. The Council further requested that I review the composition, strength and mandate of UNPREDEP and report to the Council by 30 September.

Peacemaking (International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia)

1033. The International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, which was established in August 1992, was to remain in being until a settlement of the problems of the former Yugoslavia had been achieved. However, after the signing of the Peace Agreement, it was decided that the responsibilities of the International Conference should be transferred to the appropriate organ emanating from the Agreement. Pursuant to the decisions adopted at the Peace Implementation Conference (8 and 9 December 1995) and as indicated in my report to the Security Council, the Conference ceased to exist on 31 January 1996.

1034. Until the termination of its activities, the Steering Committee of the International Conference remained under

the co-chairmanship of Thorvald Stoltenberg, representing the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and Carl Bildt, representing EU, with its seat at the United Nations Office at Geneva. In the period between the issuing of my last report on the work of the Organization and the winding-up of the Conference, the Co-Chairmen of the Steering Committee submitted three reports concerning the International Conference's Mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which was established in September 1994. Each report contained certification that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia continued to meet its commitment to close the border between it and areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina under the control of Bosnian Serb forces. The Co-Chairmen also submitted the final biannual report on the activities of the Conference.

33. Western Sahara

1035. Pursuant to my predecessor's plan for the settlement of the conflict in Western Sahara, the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) was established by the Security Council in its resolution 690 (1991) of 29 April 1991 to organize and conduct, in cooperation with OAU, a referendum of self-determination by which the people of Western Sahara would choose between independence from and integration with Morocco.

1036. As a main element of the plan, the cease-fire monitored by MINURSO has been holding since it came into effect on 6 September 1991. According to the initial timetable, the transitional period should have started on the same day and the referendum should have taken place in January 1992. However, the identification of those eligible to vote has suffered considerable delays as a result of the widely divergent positions of the two parties, the Government of Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y del Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO), on the question of tribal affiliation to the Territory and of the applicants' eligibility to vote. This has further delayed work on other aspects of the plan and has made it impossible for the United Nations to commence the transitional period, which will culminate in the referendum.

1037. In a report dated 8 September 1995, I informed the Security Council that I could not confirm 15 November as the start of the transitional period, as the Council had asked me to do in its resolution 1002 (1995) of 30 June. As continuing difficulties could not be overcome, there had not been enough progress in the identification operation. Nor had the benchmarks I had identified been met by that date. Despite repeated calls by the Security Council and myself to the parties to permit the process to advance more rapidly, both were reluctant to compromise on any issue they believed could weaken their own position. Making one more appeal to the parties to permit the expeditious implementation of the Plan, I proposed an extension of the mandate of MINURSO until 31 January 1996. If by that time the conditions necessary for the start of the transitional period were not in place, I intended to present the Council with alternative options for its consideration, including the possibility of the withdrawal of MINURSO.

1038. In its resolution 1017 (1995) of 22 September, the Security Council endorsed my recommendation to extend the mandate of the Mission until 31 January 1996, taking note of my intention as stated above. The Council asked me, in close consultation with the parties, to produce specific and detailed proposals to resolve the problems hindering the completion of the identification process and to report on the outcome of my efforts in that regard by 15 November 1995. The Council also asked me to report by 15 January 1996 on progress achieved towards the implementation of the plan and to state in that report whether or not the transitional period could begin by 31 May.

1039. In a letter dated 27 October 1995 to the President of the Security Council, I proposed simplified procedures for carrying out the identification operation, without prejudice to its reliability and to recourse procedures provided for in the terms of reference of the Identification Commission. On 6 November, the Security Council acknowledged my letter and asked me to continue my contacts with the parties on the matter and to report thereon by 15 November.

1040. On 24 November, I reported to the Security Council that the Government of Morocco considered my suggested simplified procedure to be a radical departure from the plan. I therefore suggested another procedure, which, however, neither party found satisfactory. In view of the continuing difficulties, I proposed, during my oral briefing to the Council on 15 December, to send a Special Envoy to the region in an attempt to break the deadlock in the identification process. In its resolution 1033 (1995) of 19 December, the Security Council welcomed my decision, and requested me to report on an urgent basis on the results of my Special Envoy's consultations.

1041. By that time, the Identification Commission had interviewed and identified some 61,000 applicants out of a total of 234,000 (180,000 from the Moroccan side, with 90,000 in the Territory and 90,000 in Morocco; 40,000 from the POLISARIO side, in the refugee camps near the Tindouf area of Algeria; and 14,000 in Mauritania). This process, started on 28 August 1994, was brought to a complete halt on 22 December 1995, when agreement could not be reached on procedures for the identification of a large number of remaining applicants who were members

of Saharan tribal groupings that the Frente POLISARIO did not consider to belong to the Territory.

1042. My report on the consultations of my Special Envoy, Chinmaya R. Gharekhan, was submitted to the Security Council on 19 January. As a result of his efforts, the Frente POLISARIO had agreed to resume the identification of applicants who were members of tribal subgroups (subfractions) represented in the 1974 census of the Territory. However, it would not participate in the processing of applicants from three tribal groupings not represented by subfraction in the 1974 census, as it would not be able to present sheikhs or alternates to assist in the identification of those applicants. Furthermore, it would strongly oppose any attempt to identify such applicants with the participation of a sheikh from one side only. Morocco, on the other hand, maintained that all applicants had to be processed without discrimination between different tribal groups.

1043. My Special Envoy noted that the plan made it incumbent on the Identification Commission to process all applications submitted on time. Following the Frente POLISARIO's insistence on more transparency in the work of the Commission, he agreed that it would share with both parties, in a suitable format, the list of applicants identified so far as eligible to vote, as well as a list of applicants still to be identified.

1044. In the light of the results of my Special Envoy's mission, I suggested that the Security Council extend the mandate of MINURSO for four months, until 31 May 1996. I stressed, however, that stalemate would in all probability confront us again a few months after the Identification Commission had completed the processing of applicants in accordance with the agreement reached by my Special Envoy. As a second possible option, I suggested that the Council decide that it could not justify a further extension of the mandate of the Mission and that plans for a phased withdrawal should be prepared. On 31 January, the Council adopted resolution 1042 (1996), by which it extended the mandate until 31 May and invited me, in the absence of meaningful progress towards the completion of the settlement plan at that time, to submit for consideration a detailed programme for a phased withdrawal of MINURSO.

1045. On 8 May, I reported to the Council that as a result of the positions of the parties all efforts to resume the identification process had thus far been frustrated. While both parties remained committed to the plan, the impasse reached at the end of 1995 continued. For the Frente POLISARIO, "subfractions included in the 1974 census" did not include the three contested tribal groupings. In those groupings, it would agree to identify only those individuals counted in the census and members of their immediate families. At the same time, it insisted on receiving the lists of persons already processed and found eligible to vote. Morocco, on the other hand, rejected the issuance of the lists prior to the completion of identification, on the grounds that this would be contrary to the plan and had not been endorsed by the Security Council.

1046. I was compelled to conclude that the required willingness did not exist to give MINURSO the cooperation needed for it to resume and complete the process within a reasonable period of time. In those circumstances, I felt obliged to recommend the suspension of the process until such time as both parties provided convincing evidence that they were committed to resuming and completing it without further obstacles, in accordance with the plan, as mandated by the Security Council.

1047. The suspension of the identification operation meant that the members of the Identification Commission would be withdrawn, with the exception of a few who would ensure the orderly closing of the identification centres and the storage of identification data. The suspension also entailed the withdrawal of the civilian police component, which had worked closely with the identification staff, except for a small number of officers who would maintain contacts with both sides and plan for the eventual resumption of the identification process. The records of the Identification Commission would be transferred to the United Nations Office at Geneva for safe keeping.

1048. I also proposed a 20 per cent reduction of the military component of MINURSO, which would not impair its operational effectiveness in monitoring observance of the cease-fire. I further proposed to maintain a small political office, headed by my Acting Special Representative, Erik Jensen, with a liaison office at Tindouf, to pursue a dialogue with the parties and the two neighbouring countries, Algeria and Mauritania, and to facilitate any other effort that could help resolve the parties' differences. In that regard, I instructed my Acting Special Representative to continue to explore with the parties and the neighbouring countries confidence-building measures that might allow the resumption of contacts among all concerned. In the meantime, I recommended the extension of the mandate of the Mission for a period of six months at the reduced strength outlined above.

1049. In its resolution 1056 (1996) of 29 May, the Security Council supported my proposals and decided to extend the mandate of MINURSO until 30 November 1996. The Council recalled that the parties had accepted that sole and exclusive responsibility for the organization and conduct of the referendum was vested in the United Nations. It urged them to demonstrate the political will, cooperation and flexibility necessary to permit the

resumption and early completion of the identification process and the implementation of the plan. It also called upon them to cooperate with the United Nations in the release of Saharan political prisoners and the exchange of prisoners of war on humanitarian grounds, as soon as possible, to accelerate implementation of the plan in its entirety. I was requested to continue my efforts with the parties to break the impasse and to submit a report to the Council by 31 August on the outcome of my efforts, and also to keep it closely informed of all significant developments and to submit a report on the implementation of the resolution by 10 November.

1050. After the adoption of resolution 1056 (1996), my Acting Special Representative met with representatives of both parties to suggest a course of action with respect to the main issues of the resolution. On 1 July, the Independent Jurist, accompanied by the Acting Special Representative, met with Moroccan government officials to follow up on a preliminary list of presumed political prisoners, which had already been provided to the Government of Morocco. On 2 July, the Independent Jurist, accompanied by the Acting Special Representative, met with senior Frente POLISARIO officials on the same issue. It was agreed that the Independent Jurist would visit the region again in August. At the same meeting, my Acting Special Representative discussed other issues at length with the Frente POLISARIO, including the resumption of the identification process. The Frente POLISARIO firmly rejected any notion of identifying the groups it did not consider as "subfractions" included in the Spanish census.

1051. Subsequently, my Acting Special Representative travelled to Algeria where he met with the Foreign Minister and to Mauritania where he met with the President to consult about the reactivation of the political process in Western Sahara. Meanwhile, the downsizing of MINURSO proceeded as scheduled.

1052. On 16 July, I briefed the Security Council about my meetings at Yaoundé with the Presidents of Algeria and Mauritania and with the Secretary-General of the Frente POLISARIO. I informed the Council of the concern expressed by both Presidents about the United Nations disengagement from Western Sahara and their preoccupation about a possible deterioration of the situation if no solution was found. I had informed my two interlocutors of my continuing efforts and those of my Acting Special Representative to reactivate the political process. Stressing the urgency of the situation, I asked the Members of the Council to assist in finding a solution to the problem through their own contacts and bilateral consultations with the parties.

1053. By the end of September, the number of military observers will have been reduced from 288 to 232. The final reduction to 230 personnel, the number mandated by the Security Council in resolution 1056 (1996), will be effected by the end of October. At the same time, since the suspension of the identification process, the number of civilian police officers has been reduced from 44 to 9.

E. Cooperation with regional organizations

1054. Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations defines the role that regional arrangements and organizations can play in the maintenance of international peace and security. The need for international action to maintain international peace and security has not abated, resulting in increased demands being placed upon the United Nations. The financial crisis afflicting the Organization has made it even more difficult to respond adequately, making it more important than ever that the capacities and experience of both the United Nations and regional organizations be utilized in the most effective manner possible. As a result of these trends, cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations has continued to grow and in some cases has reached considerably higher levels. In February 1996, I convened the second meeting of the executive heads of regional organizations that have cooperated in the field with the United Nations peacemaking and peace-keeping endeavours.

1. Cooperation with the Organization of American States (OAS)

1055. Since my last report, cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) has continued to increase. The Secretary-General of OAS has visited the United Nations on several occasions since the signing of an agreement of cooperation between the two secretariats in April 1995. Representatives of the two Organizations have continued to exchange information and attend each other's meetings. For example, the Director of the Americas Division of the Department of Political Affairs represented the United Nations at the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth regular sessions of the General Assembly of OAS (in 1995 and 1996, respectively).

1056. On 3 April 1996, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 50/86 B, further extending the mandate of the Joint United Nations/OAS International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH). The Executive Director of MICIVIH continues to be responsible to both myself and the Secretary-General of OAS, Cesar Gaviria. OAS and the United Nations also collaborated in the observation of the elections in Haiti in December 1995.

1057. Another significant area of cooperation between the two Organizations occurs within the framework of the tripartite committee established by the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the President of the Inter-American Development Bank and the Secretary-General of OAS to coordinate selected activities in the economic and social fields and in the implementation of the Plan of Action adopted by the Summit of the Americas in December 1994. Recent consultations between representatives of the Department of Political Affairs and OAS have resulted in the establishment of a mechanism for cooperation and coordination between the two secretariats that would permit greater flexibility in these areas.

2. Cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU)

1058. Progress continues to be made in the efforts of the United Nations to strengthen and broaden its programme of cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in the political, economic and social areas. I have been in constant contact with the current Chairman and with the Secretary-General of OAU and consulted with them on various African issues of common concern and interest with a view to coordinating our efforts and cooperating on initiatives to help prevent and resolve conflicts in the continent. This has been the case in particular with respect to Burundi, Liberia, Rwanda and Western Sahara, as well as Sierra Leone and Somalia. My Special Envoys and Representatives and those of the Secretary-General of OAU have also consulted closely and coordinated their activities.

1059. In the context of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa, I had occasion to discuss with various African leaders the continent's development needs and objectives and the specific ways in which the courageous and determined efforts of African countries for peace, development, democracy and respect for human rights could receive the support they deserve. I will continue to call upon the international community to stand together with Africa, its leaders and its people and to forge a new partnership.

1060. At the tenth annual meeting on cooperation between the secretariats of the United Nations system and OAU, held at Addis Ababa in November 1995, the two sides assessed the implementation of their multifaceted programme of cooperation and agreed on new measures to strengthen and broaden it. In the areas of peace, security and democracy, as well as on economic and social questions, the two Organizations have elaborated and defined modalities for implementing the agreed programme of cooperation. They are expected to meet again later this year to assess the feasibility of the framework and the progress achieved in the implementation of the specific programmes and to agree on new areas of cooperation.

1061. I attended the thirty-third ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of OAU, held at Yaoundé in July 1996. In my address to the Assembly, I emphasized in particular the cooperation between the United Nations and OAU in the field of preventive diplomacy and the participation of OAU member States in peace-keeping operations. The two Organizations had also achieved much progress in the establishment of the African Economic Community, in the development of human resources and training, culture, literacy, assistance to refugees and democratization. Furthermore, I stressed that it was in the same spirit that I launched on 15 March 1996 a United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa, the most extensive operation ever coordinated by the United Nations, to promote an active partnership between donor countries and African Governments and institutions in support of Africa's development.

3. Cooperation with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

1062. Cooperation with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has increased steadily since its admission as an observer to the General Assembly in 1992 and the adoption of resolution 49/141 on 20 December 1994. In my last report, I expressed appreciation for the special role played by the Community in the restoration of democracy in Haiti and, in particular, for the participation of the CARICOM contingent in UNMIH, the first time that the Community had participated in a United Nations peace-keeping operation. As a result of that involvement, I was pleased to invite the Secretary-General of CARICOM to attend the February 1996 meeting between the United Nations and regional organizations on peacemaking and peace-keeping.

1063. Collaboration with CARICOM will benefit from the establishment of a more flexible mechanism, following a review of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. I welcomed the decision by CARICOM Foreign Ministers at their twenty-second meeting, held in Jamaica in May 1996, to identify possible areas in which to move ahead in this direction, including peace-keeping, peacemaking and activities in the economic and social fields. In the interim, CARICOM continued to be represented at United Nations conferences and in their preparatory and follow-up meetings. For example, a senior official of CARICOM attended the meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development on progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the

Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held at the United Nations on 24 April. In reciprocal fashion, I continue to be represented at the highest level at CARICOM summits and to be guided by their deliberations.

4. Cooperation in the European area

1064. The European continent is home to a large number of regional organizations with which the United Nations has been increasing and enhancing its cooperation over the past several years. The United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) have previously agreed upon a practical division of labour concerning activities in Europe, and under this framework each Organization has provided support to the efforts of the other. The two Organizations work closely together in the former Yugoslavia, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina, within the framework of the Dayton Agreement, which has assigned distinct yet complementary responsibilities to the United Nations and OSCE. The United Nations has also maintained close contact with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in the context of the IFOR mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina and UNTAES in Croatia.

1065. Regarding the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, OSCE has participated in and provided support to the peacemaking efforts of my Special Envoy for Georgia, and cooperation between the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) peace-keeping force and UNOMIG remains highly effective. The Minsk Group of OSCE has the lead role in efforts to settle the dispute over the Nagorny-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, to which the United Nations has lent support and assistance. In addition, the United Nations and OSCE have worked together in Tajikistan and in a number of other fields, of which election monitoring deserves special mention. Other European organizations with which the United Nations has cooperated in the period under review include the European Union, the Council of Europe and the Western European Union. In May 1996, I had the honour of addressing the Council of Heads of State of CIS in Moscow.

5. Cooperation with the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)

1066. Regular consultations were held with the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) on issues of mutual interest, in particular the situations in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Somalia and Tajikistan. In response to General Assembly resolution 49/15, a high-level meeting was held between senior officials of the secretariats of the two Organizations in October 1995 to discuss ways to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and OIC in the political field, and it was agreed that consultations on defining the mechanisms of such cooperation would continue. In June 1996, a general meeting was held at Geneva between senior representatives of the secretariats of the two Organizations and their respective specialized agencies to review progress achieved in the nine existing priority areas of cooperation (in the economic, social and technical fields) and to identify ways and means of further consolidating and rationalizing cooperation in those areas. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/17, during the general meeting at Geneva senior officials of the political departments of the United Nations and OIC secretariats also reviewed proposals for strengthening cooperation in the political field put forward by the two secretariats. The two sides identified a number of modalities for enhancing United Nations/OIC information exchange, consultations and coordination, and agreed to hold further high-level consultations in that regard.

6. Cooperation with the League of Arab States (LAS)

1067. Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States (LAS) has strengthened as the two organizations have pursued the implementation of proposals adopted at the general meetings between them, the latest of which was held at Vienna in 1995. The joint projects in the economic and social fields have proved to be beneficial for the development of the Arab States. Regular consultations on matters of mutual concern between officials at all levels addressed patterns of coordination and cooperation in actions related to preventive diplomacy and peace-building. In order to improve relations further and to continue overall consultations, in January 1996 I made the first visit of a United Nations Secretary-General to the headquarters of LAS at Cairo.

F. Disarmament

1068. We are at a historic moment. On 10 September, the General Assembly adopted the text of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty and requested me, as depositary of the treaty, to open it for signature, at United Nations Headquarters, at the earliest possible date.

1069. The international political consensus in favour of permanently ending nuclear-weapon testing enjoys enormous support. It is now my intention as expeditiously

as possible to open the treaty for signature by all Governments.

1070. The adoption of the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty marks over a quarter of a century of concerted effort by the international community. It is a supplement to and expands the corpus of international disarmament and arms control law. It has powerful symbolic value for concrete commitment by both the nuclear-weapon and the non-nuclear-weapon States towards achieving the ultimate goal of a totally denuclearized world. It is a central element for the consolidation of the 1995 decision of the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to extend that Treaty indefinitely and for the success of the parties' efforts to pursue clearly defined objectives and principles of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. It is critical to the success of the strengthened review process of the Non-Proliferation Treaty which will start in 1997.

1071. The extensive and rigorous verification arrangements envisaged by the negotiators greatly increases the level of international cooperation in the nuclear field. The process of negotiating the treaty has already extended the capacity of Governments that participated in the testing and evaluation of the international monitoring system to communicate rapidly and accurately amongst themselves.

1072. Primary responsibility for the fulfilment of the future treaty's twin objectives of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation lies, first and foremost, with the nuclear-weapon States. I call on them to pursue in good faith further negotiations among themselves and in international forums to deepen their commitment to a nuclear-weapon-free world by further reducing their nuclear-weapon arsenals and their reliance on them for security.

1073. Universal adherence to the future treaty will ensure a more effective test-ban regime. I appeal to all nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States to sign the treaty and to take the necessary national measures to ratify it as early as possible so as to allow its swift entry into force.

1074. The comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty is not, however, an end in itself. All States, in particular nuclear-weapon States, should redouble their efforts to press for further substantive measures of nuclear disarmament, which would bring the international community closer to the realization of its goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

1075. The institutional role of the Organization as the impartial repository of international legal instruments has been recognized by the treaty's negotiators with the designation of the Secretary-General as the future treaty's depositary. I pledge, on behalf of the Organization, to fulfil the duties of promoting and monitoring adherence to the treaty, of disseminating its achievements and of supporting the parties in the initial stages of the establishment of the organization that will implement it.

1076. Two other major long-term multilateral efforts in the nuclear field have strengthened and reinforced the broad consensus in favour of nuclear disarmament and the global nuclear non-proliferation regime: the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty and the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (the Pelindaba Treaty), which were signed on 15 December 1995 and 11 April 1996, respectively. Added to these positive developments was the signature on 25 March 1996 by France, the United Kingdom and the United States of the Protocols to the 1986 South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Rarotonga), making all five nuclear-weapon States parties thereto.

1077. Nuclear-weapon-free zones are steps towards the goal of a nuclear-free world. The signing of these two treaties has rendered two great parts of the Earth's surface free of the development, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer or use of nuclear weapons. They constitute the third and fourth nuclear-weapon-free zones with high population densities, after the South Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean. With Antarctica included, the entire southern hemisphere is now nuclear free.

1078. The race for nuclear arms is clearly in a downward spiral. In parallel with the successes at the multilateral level, the Russian Federation and the United States have been reducing their strategic nuclear arms, on a daily basis and as prescribed by START I. The ratification of START II by the United States in January 1996 should encourage the Russian Federation to follow suit so that the two Powers may proceed to reducing their nuclear weapons to the agreed limits of 3,000 to 3,500 by the year 2003. In February 1996, France announced reductions in its nuclear forces, closed a weapons-grade uranium facility and ceased production of that fissile material.

1079. Nevertheless, stockpiles containing thousands of nuclear weapons still exist. In addition, vast stocks of weapons-grade fissile material still pose great risks to the world's people and environment. The threat of nuclear-weapon-related accidents, the smuggling of weapons-grade nuclear material and diverse forms of nuclear terrorism have not been banished. The 10-year commemoration in April 1996 of the disaster at Chernobyl was a sobering reminder of the long-lasting effects of a nuclear accident involving a peaceful nuclear facility and of the terror and destruction that could be unleashed by further such events. The agreements reached among the leading Powers at the Moscow Summit on Nuclear Safety and Security in April 1996 to better control, manage and secure the stockpiles of nuclear weapons and weapons-grade material were a welcome step in the right direction.

1080. Efforts towards the ultimate goal of total nuclear disarmament go hand in hand with efforts to ensure the non-proliferation of other weapons of mass destruction. It is now almost four years since the signing of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. Its entry into force is overdue. The provisions for transparency, consultation and cooperation through exchange of information and notifications with respect to existing stocks, the detailed and time-bound plans for their destruction and the rigorous verification arrangements provided for by the Convention cannot enter into force on their own. I have written twice to Member States, urging those which have not yet done so to ratify the Convention as soon as possible.

1081. To strengthen further the regime for non-proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction, experts have been progressing steadily towards effective, reliable and equitable international verification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction.

1082. Transparency in armaments has become an accepted and effective method for building regional and international confidence. Since its establishment in 1992, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms has proved itself a useful tool in that process. A significant level of participation by Member States in the Register has been sustained. Information on the major weapons systems transferred and their most important suppliers and recipients has been a matter of public record for three years running. Procedures have been simplified for the many States that have nothing to report. Yet participation is still not universal. Efforts by Governments and by the Secretariat have been made in various regions to foster greater participation in the Register. Different regional forums have continued to discuss the establishment of arms registers that would deal with weapons of immediate concern to them.

1083. There has been an upsurge of innovative and creative activity to meet the challenges in the field of conventional weapons known as "micro-disarmament". I have used this term frequently over the last year to distinguish it from the traditional disarmament items that accounted for most of the United Nations agenda during the cold war, dominated as that period was by weapons of mass destruction and major conventional weapons systems. Small arms and light weapons, including landmines, are today's instruments of choice in conflicts within States, civil strife, insurgencies, rebellions and the like. The end of the cold war is an unprecedented opportunity for United Nations intervention on this front to control the production, trade, accumulation and use of small arms and light weapons.

1084. A symbolic display of disarmament and peacemaking was enacted in the city of Timbuktu, Mali, in March 1996. A stack of some 3,000 small arms, comprising rifles, grenade-launchers and machine-guns that had been handed in by ex-combatants in the northern part of that country, was dowsed in gasoline and torched in a dramatic "Flame of Peace" ceremony. The action implemented part of the peace agreement reached in 1995 between the Government of Mali and the Mouvement et Fronts Unis de l'Azawad, and was jointly organized by the United Nations and UNDP. The ceremony was a hopeful sign of what can be achieved when the various agents and components of the peace process come together.

1085. UNDP has focused its efforts on restoring and further developing the economy of Mali, especially the less developed regions where economic marginalization has contributed to violent political unrest. The cantonment of demobilized soldiers was organized and opportunities for gainful employment made available to young ex-soldiers, who might not have known anything but war in their short lives. The United Nations helped by identifying the sources of the proliferation of small arms in Mali, by suggesting how they could be collected and by identifying ways of strengthening security in the country.

1086. For micro-disarmament to be relevant, it must deal with security concerns that are of direct and practical interest to States within a specific region. In July, 11 Central African States signed a non-aggression pact. The signing of the pact, at a ceremony I attended during my visit to Yaoundé for the annual Summit Meeting of OAU, was in itself an expression of confidence among the members of a tense and unstable region. The United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa was pivotal in the process that led to the Pact's conclusion and signature. The Committee has promoted among its members a dialogue on regional issues, exchanges of information, meetings of security and defence-related government officials, and other concrete measures. It should continue to be encouraged and supported.

1087. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons, especially the clandestine trade in them, can undermine the stability and security of States, most acutely of small States, and as a consequence even destabilize an entire region. In May 1996, a three-year effort by the United Nations Disarmament Commission resulted in a recommended set of guidelines for controlling international arms transfers and eradicating illicit arms trafficking. In June 1996, a group of governmental experts began an in-depth study on the nature and causes of excessive accumulations and transfers of

small arms and light weapons, and ways and means to reduce them. The group's work has the potential to serve as a call to action to reduce and control this new arms race.

1088. The distressing humanitarian issues related to the excessive and indiscriminate use of landmines are addressed in detail elsewhere in this report. A solution to the problem will continue to receive the Organization's priority attention. A permanent ban of this weapon of mass destruction in slow motion is the only option. The number of States that have instituted permanent bans on the transfer of anti-personnel landmines continued to grow over the year. A number of States have gone further and committed themselves to banning all production, development, stockpiling and use of anti-personnel landmines and to destroying all existing stockpiles.

1089. The Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects has finalized its work. Protocol II on Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Such Devices was revised to include internal conflicts, provisions on the transfer of landmines and further restrictions on the use of mines, some of which set precedents in the field of international disarmament law. It is a matter of special importance to the Organization that the provisions governing the protection of United Nations peace and humanitarian forces from the effects of the massive emplacement of mines are respected to the fullest.

1090. At the same time, I have made clear my disappointment at the results of the Review Conference: the revised provisions fell far short of a total ban, a position supported by the United Nations, its agencies, non-governmental organizations and ICRC, together with 34 Member States. My hope is that the annual conferences agreed to by the States parties will maintain momentum towards a more thorough strengthening of Protocol II.

1091. The Review Conference was able to achieve success in another less publicized area. The States parties adopted a new Additional Protocol IV to the Convention in which they agreed to ban the use and transfer of anti-personnel blinding laser weapons. To its credit, the new instrument has outlawed a weapon before its deployment. It is a small yet significant advance in humanitarian/disarmament law. It should be followed closely by stronger restrictions on the use of lasers for weapons purposes.

1092. Discussions surrounding the convening of the next special session on disarmament began in the United Nations Disarmament Commission in April and continued in my Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters in July this year. Such a meeting could focus world attention on the changing and evolving face of multilateral disarmament, arms control and international security at the macro and micro levels. There appears to be a general wish to convene this type of meeting, though the time-frame is still under discussion. A propitious global political environment would be important for its success and the course of the substantive preparations might be the best indicator of when would be the most favourable time to hold it. The main objective should be to ensure that the effort, which will require a mobilization of resources, will make not only a constructive contribution to international discourse in this field but will mark an advance in multilateral cooperation for disarmament.

G. Post-conflict peace-building

Strategies

1093. The primary goal of post-conflict peace-building is to avert the revival of a conflict that has been brought under control. It attempts to address the root causes, be they political, economic, social or humanitarian, that underlie the dispute that caused the armed conflict and thus consolidate the peace. It is a long-term activity that goes beyond the immediate imperative of stopping the guns and tries gradually to create conditions that will ensure that there is no reason for them ever to start again.

1094. Post-conflict peace-building is a complex process. The role of the Secretary-General is to provide the guidance that will ensure that the resources of the whole United Nations system contribute in an integrated way to the achievement of a defined political goal.

1095. As with the Organization's peacemaking and peace-keeping activities, peace-building is not a therapy that the United Nations can attempt to impose on an unwilling patient. The issues concerned are often very sensitive, especially in internal conflicts. The United Nations can only get involved if the Government or Governments concerned want it to. Although there may be occasions when the Secretary-General can legitimately suggest to Governments that certain measures may be helpful, post-conflict peace-building is not a service that can or should be imposed on Member States.

1096. The United Nations has in recent years acquired considerable experience in working with Governments to design and execute post-conflict peace-building activities. This experience identified four roles that can be played by the United Nations in this area.

1097. The first role, in the general context of early warning, is to identify situations where it appears that the United Nations could usefully help the parties to a past conflict to take measures to reduce the chances of it reigniting. The second role is to develop ideas about what

form those measures might take and to discuss them with the Government(s) concerned. The third role, assuming government consent, is to energize the programmes, funds, offices and agencies of the United Nations system and to persuade them that the proposed activities are worthwhile and fall within their mandates. The fourth role is to monitor the extent to which the agreed peace-building activities are achieving the political purpose of reducing the risk of revived conflict.

1098. Preventive diplomacy has its limits; too often disputes are resurrected and develop into conflicts before effective action can be taken to control them. In these circumstances, there must be no relaxation of the United Nations efforts to build a lasting peace. Recent experience has underlined the importance of the contribution made to those efforts by two specific activities: electoral assistance and mine clearance.

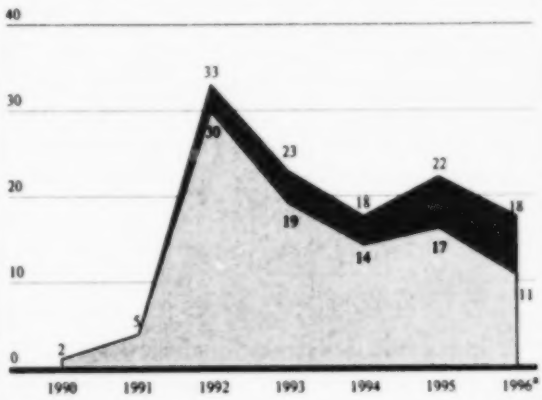
Electoral assistance

1099. In the period between August 1995 and July 1996, the United Nations received 25 new requests for electoral assistance, including from Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Bangladesh, Benin, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chad, the Comoros (two requests), the Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea (two requests), Guyana, Kyrgyzstan, Nicaragua, the Niger, Romania, Sao Tome and Principe (two requests), the Sudan, Uganda, Yemen and Zaire and the Palestinian Authority. In addition, UNTAES, established on 15 January 1996 by the Security Council (resolution 1037 (1996)), was given a mandate to organize elections, assist in their conduct and to certify the results (see fig. 21).

1100. In addition, based on requests received before August 1995, assistance was provided to Azerbaijan, Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire, Fiji, Gabon, the Gambia, Haiti, Liberia, Mexico, Mozambique, Panama, Peru, Sierra Leone, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, as well as to the United Nations missions in Guatemala and Western Sahara. Assistance could not be provided in nine cases: Albania, Benin, Cape Verde, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea (one request), Romania, Sao Tome and Principe, the Sudan and the Palestinian Authority. The requests from Armenia, Cambodia, Nicaragua, Yemen and Zaire were under consideration when this report was finalized.

1101. The type of electoral assistance provided varies according to the requests received and the resources available. Following the guidelines provided to Member States, the "coordination and support" approach was used in the cases of Azerbaijan, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Kyrgyzstan, Sierra Leone and the United Republic of Tanzania. Technical assistance was given to Bangladesh, Brazil, Chad, the Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Fiji, the Gambia, Guyana, Haiti, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Mexico, Mozambique, the Niger, Panama, Peru, Uganda and Sierra Leone. "Follow and report" (short-term observation) was provided to Algeria and Uganda. "Verification" is planned for Liberia (currently in abeyance) and "organization and conduct" is under preparation in Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium.

Figure 21
Requests from Member States for electoral assistance: annual number received and accepted, 1990-1996



* As at 31 July 1996.

1102. The cases described below — Azerbaijan, Haiti and Sierra Leone — are intended to illustrate the different types of electoral assistance provided by the United Nations during the past year.

1. Azerbaijan

1103. In June 1995, Azerbaijan requested assistance from the United Nations and OSCE for the parliamentary elections scheduled for 12 November 1995. A joint United Nations/OSCE needs assessment mission visited Azerbaijan later that same month. Based on the cooperation first established for the observation of elections for an Armenian National Assembly on 5 July 1995, the United Nations and OSCE established a Joint Electoral Observation Mission in Azerbaijan to observe the electoral process and to

coordinate and support the activities of international observers.

1104. The mission set up its headquarters at Baku, with regional offices at Ganja and Nakhichevan, and dispatched observers to cities and villages throughout the country to follow the electoral process, including the registration of candidates, the electoral campaign and poll preparations. On polling day, the Mission deployed over 100 international observers from 25 countries; over 20 international observers were fielded for the 26 November run-off elections in 20 districts. The Mission issued two press statements, the first prior to polling day and the second after the outcome of the first round.

2. Haiti

1105. In response to a request from the Government of Haiti, the United Nations established a technical team as part of UNMIH to provide technical assistance to the Provisional Electoral Council. The assistance included, *inter alia*, the preparation of an electoral budget and coordination of financial support through a United Nations trust fund established for that purpose; preparation of an operational and logistical plan and assistance in its implementation; support in the design of a communication plan and a deployment plan for registration and voting periods. The technical team also coordinated a large civic education programme, which was conducted by several organizations. Legislative elections were held in June, August and September 1995 and the presidential elections in December 1995.

3. Sierra Leone

1106. United Nations electoral assistance for Sierra Leone culminated in presidential and parliamentary elections on 26 February 1996. A second round of presidential elections took place on 15 March 1996. The initial request for electoral assistance was received in 1994 and, following a needs assessment mission, a UNDP project was elaborated in order to provide technical assistance to the Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone. During 1995, two donor conferences were organized in New York by the Electoral Assistance Division, and experts in various fields, such as electoral systems and election administration, were sent to the country. Following a decision by the Government of Sierra Leone to invite international observers for the election, the United Nations established a small secretariat at Freetown in order to provide coordination and support for the work of international observers who were present for the final phase of the electoral process.

Mine clearance

1107. The international landmine crisis has reached enormous proportions. To date, the United Nations estimates that approximately 80 to 100 million landmines are currently in the ground, with an equal number stockpiled around the world. In the past year alone, the number of affected countries and territories has increased from 65 to 69. Every month, 2,000 landmine accidents cripple or maim people during the course of their everyday lives.

1108. In response to this emergency, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs continued to exercise its role as the focal point for mine clearance in the United Nations by providing funding, coordination, programme oversight and development of new initiatives. The Department worked closely with the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, other concerned United Nations departments and agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and national Governments to enhance demining capacity and to create sustainable national programmes. The Department of Peace-keeping Operations is facing the mine problem both as a mandated objective and as a question of safety for peace-keeping troops. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs has also played a significant advocacy role in supporting my call for a ban on the manufacture, stockpiling, transfer or use of landmines, in order to stop the problem at its source.

1109. Funding was provided to support programmes through the assessed budgets of peace-keeping operations and through a variety of trust funds, including the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance, which was established to support demining activities that might otherwise experience shortfalls. During the reporting period, six programmes were supplied with resources from the Voluntary Trust Fund, totalling $6 million. The creation of the United Nations Demining Standby Capacity began in 1995; over 13 Member States pledged services and equipment.

1110. The Departments of Humanitarian Affairs and Peace-keeping Operations continued to develop the different aspects of the United Nations Central Landmine Database, to further disseminate information on minefields and mine incidents reported around the world. A common computerized mapping system is being created and, to ensure the widest target audience for this vital resource, parts of the database were placed on the Internet through the World Wide Web.

1111. The Inter-agency Standing Committee decided to develop a comprehensive list of mine producers and their subsidiary companies in order to identify those corporations

who are in the business of profiting from the trade and sale of landmines.

1112. During the reporting period, the Departments of Humanitarian Affairs and Peace-keeping Operations were responsible for programmes in Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia (one programme) and Eastern Slavonia (one programme), Mozambique and Rwanda, with continuing input into the programmes in Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic. A one-year programme was completed in Yemen. The requirements vary in structure, size, local arrangements, source of funding and implementation of the actual field operations.

1113. The Mine Clearance Programme within the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan, which began in 1989, is the longest-running international demining programme supported by the United Nations. The programme has matured to the point where 2,925 workers are primarily employed by six Afghan non-governmental organizations, one international non-governmental organization and a relief agency from the Islamic Republic of Iran. During the period under review, 109,754 mines were cleared, 215,764 unexploded ordnance devices were destroyed and approximately 2.5 million citizens received mine-awareness education.

1114. Angola is possibly the most mine-polluted country in the world. When the United Nations started demining activities in several provinces, the Angolan parties showed reluctance to begin similar activities themselves and their troops reportedly resorted to renewed laying of mines. As the military and political climate improved in the course of 1996, however, extensive mine clearance and rehabilitation of roads and bridges were carried out by UNAVEM III engineering and bridging units, MECHEM, a South African-based company contracted by the United Nations, and international non-governmental organizations. By the end of July, more than 80,000 mines had been cleared, 4,150 kilometres of road had been cleared and rehabilitated and another 4,100 kilometres of road had been verified as being free of mines or other ordnance. Surveying is being carried out nationwide to locate hazardous areas and demarcate them as accurately as possible. These activities have become crucial elements in support of the overall peace process, promoting, *inter alia*, the free circulation of the population in Angola.

1115. Angola also made great strides in creating indigenous mine-clearance and mine-awareness structures. The Government has established the National Institute for the Removal of Explosive Ordnance, which will in due course assume control of mine programmes from the United Nations and other international organizations. Meanwhile, the Central Mine Action Office, established by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in 1994, works closely with the Institute to coordinate the national mine-action programme. In cooperation with the Institute, the Central Mine Action Office developed a national plan calling for 18 demining brigades covering four regions within Angola, with a national headquarters at Luanda. By December 1996, 550 deminers and support staff will have been trained and the Office hopes to train a further 700 in 1997. The Central Mine Action Training School established by UNAVEM III opened at Luanda and has provided instruction to several groups of Angolan specialists who, under United Nations auspices, have started operations in various parts of the country. This programme will continue to operate under the authority of the Force Commander of UNAVEM III until early 1997, when it will be gradually taken over by the National Institute for the Removal of Explosive Ordnance.

1116. As the mandate for the peace-keeping operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina ended, the Departments of Peace-keeping Operations and Humanitarian Affairs coordinated with other key actors, including the World Bank, the Department of State of the United States, EU, the Office of the High Representative, IFOR, and UNHCR to establish a mine action centre under the auspices of the United Nations, in order to maintain the momentum until a national programme could be established to remove the estimated 3 million landmines in the country. The Centre was set up in March 1996 by the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, with the responsibility to advise and assist the Government in formulating and establishing a national mine-clearance programme, to coordinate mine clearance and to function as the central repository for landmine information; on 1 June, programme control of the Centre was transferred to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. A training school at Brus is being used for the training of operational teams to work with regional offices of the Centre in both the Federation and the Republika Srpska. The aim of the United Nations is to transfer full demining responsibilities to the Bosnian authorities as early as feasible.

1117. The Cambodian Mine Action Centre, a national government entity since September 1993, continued to make progress on all levels, with financial support through a voluntary trust fund from the United Nations and the international community. As of June 1996, the Centre employed 1,800 Cambodian nationals in 48 demining platoons, 18 mine-marking teams, 15 explosive ordnance disposal teams and 2 mobile mine-awareness teams.

1118. National mine-awareness activities included a National Mine-Awareness Day, conducted in Phnom Penh and three other provinces, mine-awareness billboards displayed throughout the country, and mine-awareness spots on national television and radio. Minefield verification

proceeded well, with 355 suspected areas inspected in the provinces of Siem Reap, Kampot, Takeo, Kampong Speu, Kampong Chang and Sihanoukville. Within the past four months, the Cambodian Mine Action Centre cleared 2.8 square kilometres and destroyed 2,315 mines and 5,628 unexploded ordnance devices. Following detailed surveys carried out in the last two years, estimates of the number of mines in Cambodia have decreased from 10 million to between 4 and 6 million. None the less, landmines affect approximately 50 per cent of the country and have placed a terrible burden on its agricultural and medical infrastructures.

1119. An estimated 3 million landmines have been planted in Croatia as a result of the extended conflict in the former Yugoslavia. On 1 June, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs assumed responsibility for the Mine Action Centre at Zagreb, which has the mission to collect, collate and disseminate minefield information and provide mine-awareness training. The Centre also supports the Government's efforts to establish a comprehensive national mine-clearance programme. It is estimated that there are 60,000 landmines in Eastern Slavonia. A Centre has been established within the office of the Force Engineer of UNTAES in order to coordinate the mine-clearance programme.

1120. Following a serious increase in the use of landmines and in the number of mine accidents, one of which killed a United Nations military observer in Georgia, two technical experts from the Department of Peace-keeping Operations were sent to train the military observers in the use of mine-detection, mine-awareness and protection equipment.

1121. The Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic requested assistance from UNDP to clear the millions of pieces of unexploded ordnance delivered within its borders during the 1960s and 1970s. The Departments of Humanitarian Affairs and Peace-keeping Operations sent an expert team to Vientiane in December 1995 to assess the situation. The Lao National UXO Programme, overseen by UNDP and currently in the initial stage, is in the process of establishing a national capability, including the creation of a trust fund to cover expenses.

1122. Mine clearance in Mozambique, under the United Nations Accelerated Demining Programme, continued to expand steadily. The Mozambican programme trained and fielded 10 mine-clearance platoons, with a field headquarters for mine-clearance operations in the southern provinces of Maputo, Gaza and Inhambane. The Government of Mozambique is developing a national non-governmental organization that will oversee the demining functions, including the accountability and operational efficiency of the programme.

1123. At the conclusion of its mandate, UNAMIR announced that it had cleared over 1,400 mines and disposed of over 1,500 pieces of unexploded ordnance.

1124. The Department of Peace-keeping Operations continued to collect information on the landmine situation in Western Sahara, in the event the mandate of MINURSO is expanded. This information will be made available to any future humanitarian mine-clearance programme that may be established.

1125. At the request of the Government of Yemen, between April 1995 and March 1996 the United Nations furnished a small-scale programme to provide advice to the Government on the clearance of an estimated 30,000 landmines. The programme established a database for the collection and collation of minefield data. The landmine information specialist acted as a technical adviser on safe and reliable methods required to remove and destroy munitions and provided training on specialized demining equipment.

1126. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs continued to work cooperatively with ICRC and other non-governmental organizations to further the visibility of the landmine issue within the international community. As part of a mine-awareness campaign, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs presented a multimedia exhibition on the landmine situation at the Palais des Nations, the United Nations Office at Vienna and at Headquarters. In late 1995, the Department published the first issue of a newsletter entitled *Landmines*. Issued on a quarterly basis, the newsletter provides information on mine-related activities from within and outside the United Nations system.

1127. The Government of Denmark hosted the International Conference on Mine-clearance Technology, with technical and substantive support from the United Nations, at the Scanticon Conference Centre near Copenhagen in July 1996. The Conference examined ways to improve mine-clearance technology for mine-affected developing countries and developed international humanitarian standards for demining. The primary focus was on new technology developments, rather than the political, social or economic impact of landmines.

V

Conclusion: Peace, development, democratization

1128. The pages of this report depict a United Nations in the midst of a dramatic transformation.

1129. The process began with the abrupt end of the cold war, when the bipolar system — a somewhat predictable, if not agreed system, according to which nations could order their relations — suddenly collapsed. With that collapse came a new hope that the promise of the Charter of the United Nations could be renewed, that an international system based on collective security, shared values and cooperative problem-solving could finally be achieved. It is in this context that Member States called the United Nations to action unprecedented in scale or scope.

1130. The transformation has been neither smooth nor easy. The realities and assumptions of 50 years ago cannot simply be recreated, nor can the full dimensions of the changes taking place and their implications be instantly understood. Expectations for the United Nations were too high at the outset of what must inevitably be a long and difficult process, for after every major conflict in history has come to a close, it has taken years, sometimes a generation or more, to put in place a workable and enduring international system. In the aftermath of the cold war, the transformation to a new international system is still under way, but the United Nations, the world's vehicle in this process, has — sometimes painfully, sometimes with success — moved definitively forward. Political realities have been transformed. New forms of international cooperation have been required and continue to take shape. New rules, concepts and procedures are emerging case by case. The structures of the United Nations are being streamlined and opened, the Organization streamlined and deregulated, costs reduced, accountability strengthened and performance improved. In the past five years alone, the distance travelled has been great. The time has come to examine how what has been achieved so far relates to a vision of the United Nations for the period ahead.

1131. The United Nations has worked to bring peace and security to a world in which conflicts and confrontations within States are now more prevalent than wars between them. The first-ever Summit Meeting of the Security Council (January 1992) and the subsequent report to the Council on an Agenda for Peace launched an international debate on the role of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security under these new circumstances and engendered an ongoing process of initiative, discovery and reflection. Preventive diplomacy has been identified as a priority, the Organization's capacity for it strengthened and a preventive deployment force has been authorized for the first time. While traditional United Nations peace-keeping has continued to prove effective in conflict situations between States that have the will to maintain peace, the United Nations has worked to adapt its peace-keeping instrument to deal with internal conflicts through more complex, multifaceted operations. These incorporate elements of traditional peace-keeping with political, social, economic, humanitarian and human rights aspects, an approach that has proved most successful where conflicts are being resolved through processes of negotiation, but has encountered setbacks where war situations continued. An important part of these efforts has been to advance United Nations cooperation with regional organizations in peace and security on an ad hoc basis and under Chapter VIII of the Charter. Another important dimension has been a new emphasis on post-conflict peace-building — linking conflict control and resolution with action to address the roots of conflict and strengthen the basis for reconstruction and development. And disarmament remains integral to United Nations peace efforts; the historic decision reached at the United Nations to extend indefinitely the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons has reaffirmed the process of macro-disarmament as vigorous and essential, while steps are being taken to explore the new idea of micro-disarmament, with a view to its integration into the wider context of preventive diplomacy and peace-building.

1132. In human rights and humanitarian assistance, the United Nations has continued to serve as the universal forum for advancing consensus and as a coordinating mechanism among the many organizations active in the field. While the easing of ideological tensions and the acceleration of democratization has spurred progress on one

level, the new conflicts have all too often been accompanied by massive human rights violations and humanitarian emergencies, posing new challenges. The United Nations in response has moved to integrate, to the extent possible, its human rights and humanitarian efforts with its peace efforts and to link both areas of effort to its work for reconstruction and development; mechanisms to those ends have been strengthened at Headquarters to enhance substantive and logistical support for forging such linkages and cooperation in the field. The Organization has pursued closer cooperation with its key operational partners, governmental and non-governmental, in the human rights and humanitarian communities. At the request of Member States, it has deployed human rights field presences in several countries. It has expanded its advisory services and technical cooperation for building national human rights and humanitarian infrastructure, and it has strengthened its capacity for and emphasis on early warning and preventive action.

1133. Development and democratization can themselves be the most effective forms of conflict prevention. The United Nations has therefore endeavoured to ensure that urgent efforts in peace-keeping and humanitarian assistance do not detract from long-term efforts for human progress.

1134. Facing a sharp decline in international development assistance, the United Nations has worked to forge international agreement on a new rationale and framework for development cooperation, through the ongoing debate on the Agenda for Development. As an integral part of this process, the continuum of global conferences has produced specific commitments and is giving shape to the comprehensive agenda and cooperative framework that are now needed. My contribution to this process, through my reports on an Agenda for Development and promotion of an integrated approach to the preparation of these conferences, has been followed by an unprecedented effort on the part of the United Nations system as a whole to bring about a coordinated follow-up to their outcomes around common priority themes — employment, social services, the enabling environment, the advancement of women and poverty reduction.

1135. Meanwhile, the Secretariat has continued to work to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in carrying out policy analysis and operational mandates and in utilizing the development assistance provided by Member States. Working to define better the Organization's role and to strengthen its capacity in the three key areas of information-gathering and analysis, policy coordination and technical cooperation for capacity-building has not only served to sharpen its own contribution and impact, but has also greatly advanced efforts to achieve a more effective division of labour within the United Nations system as a whole. New levels of cooperation have been reached between the United Nations and the agencies of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, one major coordinated effort being the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa, designed to mobilize, coherently and efficiently, international support for Africa's priority development goals.

1136. Supporting democratization is becoming a new thrust in the work of the United Nations. Electoral assistance from the United Nations continues to grow, while the full range of support for societies to prepare the institutional and cultural ground in which democratization can take shape is being expanded in the increasing number of Member States that seek it. At the same time, the United Nations is working to promote democratization internationally. One way of doing this is by opening United Nations forums to the views of non-State actors, such as regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, parliamentarians, members of the academic and business communities and the media. Another integral element of the United Nations efforts to promote democratization internationally is the ongoing effort to promote respect for the rule of law in international relations and the progressive development of international law. Major steps in this direction include the increased use by Member States of the International Court of Justice in both dispute settlement and the provision of advisory opinions, the entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the establishment by the Security Council of international tribunals to judge war crimes and crimes against humanity in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, and the beginning of negotiations on the establishment of a permanent international criminal court.

1137. This surge in new activity and substantive change across the spectrum of United Nations efforts has both demanded and enabled major institutional reform. This report details my ongoing effort at the managerial level towards a mission-driven, result-oriented Organization, showing enhanced performance, improved productivity and increased cost-effectiveness.

1138. The simplification of Secretariat structures that I have introduced — to reflect not the structures but the key areas of work of the intergovernmental machinery — has paved the way for a further reorganization at the Secretariat level, which, as I indicated last March in my statement to the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System, must encompass not only the central Secretariat but also the secretariats of the many programmes and funds of the Organization. The aim would be to achieve a more integrated Organization — one in which the central Secretariat, the regional structures and the operational entities could plan and act as one.

1139. Like my earlier initiatives on organizational reform, this initiative is designed to avoid the common flaw of restructuring exercises in years past, which was to create additional layers of coordination, superimposed on multiple and diverse entities. Instead, the guiding principle of my initiatives has been and will continue to be simplification and consolidation, achieved through a "bottom up" approach to eliminate duplication in support services and overlap in activities.

1140. This further phase of reorganization would group all entities that are part of the Organization into a small number of clusters. Each cluster would undertake a set of central Secretariat responsibilities and would comprise related programmes and funds contributing to common objectives and functions. Clusters would thus serve to advance strategic objectives of the Organization as a whole — peace and security, human rights, humanitarian assistance, economic and social analysis, operational activities for development. At the same time, management support and services would be further consolidated and strengthened. Each cluster would include not only the programmes and funds that would be its main pillars but also a capacity, drawn from existing Secretariat departments, to provide integrated support to the intergovernmental body charged with imparting overall policy direction to the work of the entities constituting each cluster.

1141. From my experience over the past five years, I am convinced that the personal and direct involvement of the Secretary-General is essential to effective management, in particular at times of mass change. For such involvement to be sustained and in fact enhanced, some form of substantial reduction in the number of lines of reporting to the Secretary-General — there are now some 30 United Nations entities reporting to him directly — is seriously needed. While preserving the distinct identity of the various programmes and funds, reorganization along the lines suggested above would establish broader spheres of management responsibility and significantly reduce the number of lines of reporting to the Secretary-General. It would assist the Secretary-General in imparting common management directives to entities that contribute to common objectives and together represent a basic dimension of the Organization's work. It would also facilitate the crucial task of promoting effective linkages among the basic dimensions of the work of the United Nations, thereby sustaining the unitary character of its mission, as envisaged in the Charter.

1142. The implementation of such an initiative, or other further progress in reform at the managerial and organizational levels, will require endorsement and complementary initiatives at the intergovernmental level. One major requirement in this regard will be for Member States to strengthen the capacity of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to provide coherent overall guidance to the basic dimensions of the work of the Organization. This is one important aspect of the major questions of intergovernmental reform now before five open-ended working groups of the General Assembly: on an Agenda for Peace, an Agenda for Development, the financial situation of the United Nations, Security Council reform, and the strengthening of the United Nations system.

1143. Reform, both political and institutional, must be ongoing. It is a process, not an event. There is no one point where the United Nations could declare reform "done". But the current critical phase of transformation can be brought to completion, and it must be, if we are to put the United Nations firmly on the road to a future in which collective security, the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and the promotion of social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom can proceed as intended by the Charter.

1144. Reform efforts in the past year have shown us the future of the Organization. It is in essence a simple vision — a vision of a United Nations that works.